

# NO REDUCTION: NO RENT!

WITH

## The Story of Woodford

AND

## THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

ON

## The Plan of Campaign.

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BY

THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF THE "PALL MALL GAZETTE."

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With the Story of Woodford and  
The Plan of Campaign.

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## P R E F A C E .

*16 Jan 28 1887*  
 THIS Report is the result of an honest and impartial attempt to ascertain whether rents could be paid in Ireland this winter without a reduction. Our Commissioner has arrived at a very clear and definite conclusion, on grounds which are set forth in detail in the subsequent pages. In order to make the publication complete, there is added the text of the Plan of Campaign promulgated by *United Ireland*, and adopted by the tenantry on several Irish estates, and the interview with the Archbishop of Dublin, in which Dr. Walsh proclaimed his adhesion to the Plan of Campaign, and defended it from those critics who assailed it from the standpoint of morality.

In publishing a Report the general conclusion of which is accurately set forth in the title of this pamphlet, "No Reduction: No Rent," a prefatory word should be said in favour of the strict and prompt payment of the reduced rent in all cases where the landlord has been reasonable and has given timely reductions to his tenants. The good landlord is not only the best friend of his tenant, he is also the worst enemy of the bad landlord, and in their own interest, Irish tenants cannot be too careful to reward reasonable and fair dealing on the part of their landlords by a prompt payment of the reduced rent. It is the example of the good landlord that is the most effective weapon in beating down the claims of the rack-renter, and self interest dictates that landlords should be encouraged to make necessary temporary reductions by the certainty that, if adequate reductions are made, their tenants will pay up like men of honour. Nothing damages the tenant's cause so much as the apparent injustice wrought by the blind indiscrimination by which the same measure is often meted out alike to the inveterate rackrenter and to the easy-going, liberal landlord who has never raised his rents for fifty years.

The Plan of Campaign although reprinted here forms no part of the recommendations or the Report of the Commissioner of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Its employment is only justifiable—as an act of war is justifiable—as the *ultima ratio* of tenants who are absolutely unable to pay more rent than that which they tender to the trustee. Mr. W. O'Brien, who promulgated the scheme in *United Ireland*, has declared in the most explicit manner that "I can tell the landlords we did not desire, and we do not desire now, that the Plan of Campaign should be adopted anywhere except where the tenants have a just, a moderate, and an unimpeachable case."

Any departure from this line of conduct, any insistence upon reductions that are not "just, moderate, and unimpeachable," would be mischievous in the extreme. The more moderate the demands which the Plan of Campaign is employed to enforce, the more overwhelming will be the force of public sentiment arrayed against the landlord whose obstinacy has rendered resort to so extreme an expedient unavoidable.

Objection has been taken to the Report on Irish rents because the scope of the inquiry has been sedulously limited to the economic phase of the question, leaving on one side its political aspect. But what is wanted in Ireland is justice. The Report on Irish rents endeavours to point out clearly and accurately what justice demands. If its conclusions are correct then the English Government and the majority of the English Parliament are at this moment standing in the way of justice being done in Ireland. Home Rule will come, as come it will, not because of any abstract theories or romantic day dreams, but because long and unvarying experience proves that England, not from wickedness but from inevitable lack of knowledge and understanding, cannot or will not do justice between man and man, between class and class, in Ireland. The struggle this winter for a just abatement of impossible rents, which the vote of an English Legislature has forced upon the Irish people, is only the latest illustration of England's inability to do justice in Ireland. So far, therefore, as this Report demonstrates the justice of the tenants' claim, it may be accepted as a fresh link in the chain of arguments in favour of Home Rule. That, however, was not its primary purpose, which was economic and social rather than national and political.

But it may be worth while pointing out that if Ireland had even enjoyed so much self-government as would have given the control of Irish affairs to the Irish representatives sitting as a Grand Committee at Westminster the question of the amount of the reduction to be made this winter, instead of being fought out in a quasi-social civil war, would have been relegated to the arbitrament of the constituted tribunals. For all the turmoil and the rough injustice to individuals that will ensue from the strike for reductions this winter, the English Government and the English majority in the House of Commons have only themselves to blame. The responsibility for that does not lie at the Irish door.

## CAN IRISH RENTS BE PAID?

OUR COMMISSIONER'S REPORT.

THE inquiry whether Irish rents can be paid in full ought not to be necessary, on the assumption that the Irish are capable of self-government. For whether there is or is not severe depression in agriculture in any country necessitating a reduction is one of those matters upon which the people of that country speaking through their representatives in Parliament are the final authority. It is an anomaly that an Englishman should go over to discuss a question of fact on which the representatives of Ireland are practically unanimous. Absolute unanimity is out of the question, but upon the point of fact whether a reduction is or is not needed in the November rents Irish members are agreed. There are 85 members against 18 in favour of legislating to meet the difficulty on the lines of Mr. Parnell's bill. That in itself is a proof which would be accepted as adequate in every constitutional country that a reduction was necessary. But the case is stronger than that. Of the minority of 18 who voted against Mr. Parnell on principle I doubt whether eight would declare that no reduction was necessary. Some of the 18—Colonel Saunderson, for instance—have themselves given their tenants a reduction. The representatives of Ireland are therefore agreed. If Ireland had Home Rule the question would never have been raised in this country. Nay, even on Mr. Bright's plan of leaving Irish members to settle Irish affairs in a Grand Committee of Irish representatives, there would still have been no question about the matter. That there is any question about it, or that there is any disorder and trouble in Ireland this winter, is entirely and solely due to the fact that last Session a majority of English members overruled the representatives of Ireland and refused to allow them to adjust their legal machinery so as to do justice legally between man and man.

Let us dismiss all that from the mind as beside the question, for the problem of the hour in Ireland is not that of Home Rule, but of Rent. There is no abatement in the popular demand for the former, but it is the latter that preoccupies public attention. And rightly; for Home Rule is a question that concerns the individual but indirectly and remotely; the rent question is one which comes home to the breeches pocket of every tenant. Home Rule can wait at least till next year. The rent must be produced this month. For the moment, therefore, the demand for restoration of the Irish Legislature has fallen into the background. It may be discussed in towns, and references to "Ireland a nation," no doubt, serve as garnishing for the speeches of the agrarian agitators; but the one practical question is whether or not the November rents will be paid—or, rather, how much of the May rent which falls due in November will be paid this month and next.

It was to form some idea as to the probable solution of this vexed question that I went to Ireland and spent the last five weeks\* in examining the evidence afforded me as to the condition of the farming industry across the St. George's Channel.

It is, no doubt, extraordinarily difficult to generalize accurately, even after the most prolonged and minute scientific investigation, concerning social phenomena in

any country, and the boundless diversity of the circumstances of different estates, counties, and provinces renders the task of the inquirer in Ireland one of peculiar difficulty. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the curious national belief in the exceptional irregularity of all ordinary phenomena which is attributable to the Irish idiosyncrasy, the laws of nature are not suspended even in Ireland. Two and two make four there as elsewhere, averages can be struck, probabilities calculated, and the undeviating operation of the law of gravitation reckoned upon as confidently in Ireland as in other parts of her Majesty's dominions. There have been some who imagine that the laws of political economy have been banished from Ireland to Jupiter or Saturn. But if so they have made but a brief sojourn in the remoter planets, for they have resumed their sway in Ireland at this moment. Like the other exiles of Erin who were banished, not to the further planets but across the Atlantic, they are supreme to-day in the island which they were supposed to have quitted for ever. "Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret." The tumbling of rents which is going on all over Ireland is not due to the Land Act, but to political economy. The value of Irish land is collapsing, not because the agitators are abroad and Boycotting is rife, but because America and Australia are underselling the Irish grazier in the English market, and at present prices the farmer cannot make his rent. The reductions now being made are being effected not so much by the cumbrous machinery of Land Courts, but by the simple, natural, and normal method of the higgling of the market between buyer and seller, between the man who has land to let and the man to whom he wishes to let it. No Land Court can keep pace with the quicksilver of the market barometer, and nothing is more remarkable in Ireland to-day than the wholesale fashion in which fair rents, fixed by the Land Courts only a couple of years ago, are now set aside as being at least temporarily unfair by both parties to the fifteen years' judicial lease granted under the provisions of the Land Act of 1881.

In order to decide whether the existing rents ought or ought not to be paid in full, I am willing to eliminate all political and social considerations, and deal with the question solely from the point of view of economics. If the land has maintained its value, then, all agitation notwithstanding, the tenant should pay the rent fixed in his lease, judicial or otherwise. Has it done so, or has it not? That is the question. If it has not, then all the machinery of the law can only extract from the tenant payments which are really drafts upon his landlord's capital; if it has, then all the agitation and boycotting yet dreamed of will fail to do more than temporarily divert the payment of the landlord's rent to other quarters. The real forces which in the long run govern the rent question are economic forces, and all legal and agitating machinery will succeed or will fail in so far as its end coincides with that towards which the economic forces are tending.

### THE IRISH CHIEF SECRETARY'S EXPERIENCE AS A LANDLORD.

It is fortunate that at this moment the office of Irish Secretary is held by a statesman who is also a landlord, and an English landlord. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach is

\* The first portion of this Report appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in November. My first visit to Ireland lasted from the end of September to the beginning of November.

the owner of two considerable English estates, one of 3,700 acres on the slopes of the Cotswold Hills, in Gloucestershire, the other of 8,200 acres in the middle of Salisbury Plain. On neither of these estates has there been any agitation, or boycotting, or no-rent manifesto. They lie in the heart of the most tranquil and conservative of English rural districts. Yet six years before prices fell to their present abnormal level the pressure of the same economic revolution which is ruining the Irish landlords compelled Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to reduce his rents all round, and rendered it impossible for him to let at any price nearly 1,500 acres of English soil. On his Gloucester estate, where rents had been unchanged at 26s. 9d. and 20s. per acre for a period far beyond his recollection, they were reduced to 22s. and 14s.—that is, a fall of from 18 to 30 per cent. as early as 1881, before the heavy further fall in price which took place last year, and has continued this. On his Wiltshire estate rents dropped from 22s. to 14s. per acre on some lands, on others from 16s. 9d. to 10s.—that is, a fall of from 20 to 30 per cent. And this, be it remembered, not on heavy wheat land. His Cotswold property is purely arable; that on Salisbury Plain is all sheep farms. All the improvements on his farms were made at his expense. Yet in Gloucester a farm of 325 acres was thrown on his hands, of which he said in 1881, "I cannot let to anybody, at any price." In 1880 1,110 acres of land in Wiltshire were thrown on his hands. Describing his experience to the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1881, he said:—

I have had it on hand ever since. I have advertised it, I have put it into the hands of land agents and valuers, but I have not had one single offer for it. I am working it myself; it is the only thing I can do. [It was in very tolerable order. It used to be let at 18s. per acre. I should be very glad to reduce it very much below that to my tenants.

Nor was that by any means an exceptional experience. He went on to say:—

There is nearly the whole of a property not immediately adjoining but at no great distance from mine which is practically out of cultivation, and the reason was that the owner had made up his mind that he would make but one uniform reduction of 15 per cent. to his tenants, but would not go beyond that. The tenants did not consider that sufficient, and practically they have almost left him. He is unable to find others to take their place. The land now grows weeds, and practically I imagine that it would be almost impossible to find a tenant for it, even if times were better.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach in 1881 did not think that rents had touched bottom. "I do not think that we are safe from falling still more." On one farm which let in 1877 at £1,300 he spent £6,000 in the ten years from 1871-81, and then had to relet it, not merely without obtaining any interest on the money invested in new buildings, &c., but at a reduction of rent to £1,010, and even then his tenant asked for further reduction. On another small farm he spent £2,000, and had afterwards to reduce the rent from 11s. to 10s. per acre. "I feel," said the Irish Secretary, "that for some time to come rents must be very largely reduced, as compared with what they were." The net result of his experience before 1881—that is, before the Irish Land Act had reduced the rents of Irish landlords by a single shilling—is that of 11,000 acres on his estate, notwithstanding a large capital expenditure by the landlord on buildings and improvements, rents had tumbled from 18 to 30 per cent., were likely to tumble still more, and that 1,500 acres, or one-seventh of his estate, were thrown on his hands because no one could be found to pay him any rent at all. This is the economic starting-point of the Irish Chief Secretary, and this

enables him to understand the struggle which is now going on in Ireland much better than many of his predecessors. It is from the standpoint supplied by such facts that the British public must approach the agrarian agitation that prevails in Ireland this November.

#### THE FALL IN VALUE OF ENGLISH LAND.

The evidence taken by the Royal Commission on Depression in Trade abounds with startling statements of the effect which ordinary economic causes have wrought on English agriculture where there has been no agitation. Some of the evidence has been thus summarized by a member of the Commission:—

"Mr. Harris intimates that the agricultural tenants of England have during the last nine years lost one-third of their capital. The loss would appear to have been more severe during the last two years, especially in Northumberland, owing to the fall in the price of wool, and also in the wheat-growing districts and on soils difficult to cultivate; so much so that tenants of small holdings of eight, ten, or twelve acres in Northumberland have, in many instances, had to apply for parochial relief.

"It is stated that, speaking generally, there is scarcely a farmer in the country who, by reason of the reduction in the value of animals and stock in general, is not, taking his capital into account, 40 per cent. poorer than he was twelve years ago.

"At present the tenants are not making anything, but are losing. The capital of the farmer is gradually going, his stock, his horses, and his cattle diminishing. The cultivation of the land is seriously deteriorating. And this is not confined to inferior lands, for there is land unlet in England and going out of cultivation which, if properly cultivated, would grow large crops of corn.

"Mr. Martin, from the Island of Ely, says that in the exceptional years we have lately been having arable farming cannot be carried on at a profit even if there be no rent to be paid, and that under rent it cannot be carried on without loss. Mr. Rowlandson, from Durham, says that an inferior, or even average, farm cannot be carried on now without loss, even without paying rent. Similarly, Mr. Harris, from Devonshire, says, with regard to the general run of tillage land in England, a man cannot farm an ordinary tillage farm on the ordinary lines of farming, even if rent free, without loss. If the present system continues, and farmers pay rent for another three or four years out of capital, their capital will be gone altogether.

Sir James Caird says that he thinks it very probable that in some cases in Northumberland the rent has come entirely out of tenants' capital.

"Speaking generally for the last few years, the tenant has been paying portion at least of the rent out of capital, and during the last year from 15 to 20 per cent.

"A witness from the Isle of Ely says that in three out of the last five years he has paid his rent entirely out of capital, and though during the rest of that period the rent was not paid out of capital yet he himself made no profit; that during the last two years his rent was taken entirely from capital."

According to a writer in the *St. James's Gazette*, which is certainly free from any suspicion of sympathy with Irish tenants, the rental of England has fallen £15,000,000 in the last ten years, or as much as the sum total of the Irish rent roll. It was 60 millions. It is now 45 millions. "There is no doubt that agricultural rents on an average of all districts are less than 25 per cent. The incomes of the tenants have possibly diminished by at least as much." That is, say, English farmers and land-

lords between them are 30 millions a year poorer than they were in 1876. In presence of that gigantic depreciation the drop in Irish rent of half a million effected by the Land Act seems very insignificant. Mr. Beadel, M.P., president of the Surveyors' Institution, said that in England the average price of agricultural land sold had fallen from £52 per acre in 1875 to £32 in 1885, a drop of 40 per cent. in the capitalized value of English land.

A correspondent writes as follows:—The reductions in rent made *this gale* by Irish landlords are really small compared to reductions made in many counties in England by landlords who have had farms thrown on their hands and are very anxious to find tenants. It is reported that a farm of 224 acres near Spalding, Lincolnshire, which was let on lease for £770 per annum—it must have been excellent land—has now, on the expiration of the term, been relet at £250 per annum. Here is not a reduction on "*this gale*," which may be continued or not as the landlord chooses when the next half-year's rent comes to be paid, but a permanent reduction, to last the time for which the farm has been taken. This is a reduction of nearly 70 per cent., beside which the Irish abatements are petty. Half the abatement that has been made on this Lincolnshire farm would render Ireland as peaceable as New South Wales. Had this property been in Ireland, and held by seventy-seven tenants, the landlord would probably, after some difficulty, have made an abatement of 10 per cent., or thereabouts, reducing his rental to £700 a year.

#### THE STRIKE AGAINST EXCESSIVE RENTS.

If we approach the discussion of the demand for a reduction in Irish rents from the standpoint of the undisputed fall in the value of English land, it is not less necessary for the investigator to take across the Channel the teachings of the great industrial movements of our time. For the National League is closely akin to a great trade union of Irish tenant-farmers, and its agitation is little more than a desultory skirmishing strike in favour of lower rents. Bearing these two facts in mind I crossed the Irish Channel for the first time at the end of September in order to endeavour to ascertain if possible what are the fundamental facts which underlie, and which will in the end decide, the issue raised by the great Irish strike for a reduction of the November rent. Rents in Ireland may be divided into three classes—leasehold, judicial, and ordinary contract rents. Judicial rents date from the passing of the Land Act in 1881. Of these there are 177,461, of which 172,085 were fixed in 1881-5. Leaseholders, of whom there are 100,000, form a class apart. They are excluded by Mr. Gladstone's characteristic veneration for a contract under seal from entering the Land Court, and nothing but the general principle governing the deterioration of the value of land of late years can afford us any guide as to the extent to which they are suffering. In the case of the ordinary contract tenants who hold from year to year there are a great number who are not agricultural tenants at all, but merely labourers and fishermen, who pay from £1 to £4 per annum for their cottages and bits of land. There are others who, either from fear or from some other motive, have not gone into the court, but of the bulk of the others it may fairly be assumed that they have appealed to the Land Commission because they have either privately readjusted their rents to the standard of the judicial rents, or because they have hitherto been satisfied that their rents were not likely to be reduced if they did go into court. Excluding leaseholders and a few estates where the tenants are either too timid or too ignorant to avail themselves of the advantages of the

Land Act, it may be said that the rents of Irish tenants are now about the figure that was regarded as a fair rent by the valuers of the Land Commission in the first four years after the passing of the Act.

Is that rent a fair rent to-day? That is the question to which an answer is required. In order to narrow the issue as much as possible it is necessary to ignore for present purposes the complaints, which are loud, if not widespread, against the unfairness of the decisions of the Land Commissioners, first on the ground of the landlord leanings of some of the Assistant Commissioners; secondly, because of the exceeding caprice and irregularity of the decisions of different Commissioners; and, thirdly, because of the judgment in the Dunseath case, which permitted a tenant to be rented on the improvements made by himself or his predecessors in title. Let us admit, however, that these complaints are unfounded, and that the judicial rents fixed for 1881-5 represent as near an approximation to ideal fair rents as mortal man can arrive at here below.

#### THE THREE QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED.

Can that rent be paid this winter? To answer that it is necessary to ascertain—

First, whether there has been this year any great and unexpected change in the condition of Irish agriculture affecting the ability of the tenant to pay his rent since it was fixed by the Land Court.

Secondly, whether, as a matter of fact, this alteration for the worse was or was not foreseen and allowed for by the Commissioners in fixing judicial rents.

And, thirdly, whether the necessity for at least a temporary reduction in the judicial rents of 1881-5 is being recognized generally by the more intelligent landlords. Upon all these points it seemed to me that it was not impossible to gather sufficient facts—even in Ireland—to arrive with some approximate degree of accuracy at the merits of the demand which is being made for a reduction of the November rents.

To obviate misconception, I may say that it would not be sufficient to establish the need for a reduction of rent merely to prove that Irish agriculture was suffering from one of the ordinary vicissitudes of the business, such as the Land Commissioners could fairly be expected to take into account. When a judicial rent was fixed it was fixed for fifteen years, and it was supposed to be fixed at a figure which, taking one year with another and allowing for ups and downs, would allow a tenant to live and thrive. Nothing could be more unfair than to insist that the rent should be lowered whenever there is an ordinarily bad harvest or low prices, unless, indeed, it could be raised whenever there is an exceptionally good harvest or prices rule high. The tenant is supposed to meet the losses of a bad year by the gains of a good one. This supposition, however, would not stand the strain of any very widespread calamity. If, for instance, the potato were to fail universally in any one year, or all the cattle were to perish of rinderpest, or if beef, pork, and butter fell to a penny a pound, the most obstinate stickler for "fullrent without abatement" would admit that it would be impossible for the farmers to pay it. The question, therefore, to be answered is whether the losses which the farmers are now suffering approach the dimensions of such an unforeseen disaster as to justify a remission of the rent fixed as fair only a year or two ago.

#### THE HARVEST OF 1886.

There is no pretence that, so far as the north and centre of Ireland are concerned, there is any considerable failure of crops this year. On the contrary, the opinion is nearly

universal that the total yield of crops of all kinds, but particularly of hay and grass, has been over rather than under average. Unfortunately, owing to the long continued wet weather which set in after the end of July, the crop has been badly harvested, especially in all those lands where the sowing was so late that the crops did not ripen in time to be reaped before the bad weather set in. Irishmen who have for generations been the harvesters of England are not expeditious in their harvesting operations at home. They take it easy, dawdle, and let the fine days pass before they get their crops under cover. Hence they run more risks than they need to do, and many a field of corn is sprouted which by a little more promptitude would have been saved with ease. Especially was this the case with the farmers down in Munster, where I heard loud complaints as to the destruction of the crops by the rain. Barley was "blacktailed." As for the oat crop, it was hardly worth carrying home. It was the worst harvest since 1879, so I was assured repeatedly at Cork, and that was before the great storm of wind and rain that burst over Ireland in the middle of October. Grain was still standing in stalks in the north of Ireland in the last week of October. Near Ballinasloe hay that was cut in August was being stacked in the third week in October. The weather has been so bad it was impossible to get it led earlier. The habit of allowing hay to remain in the fields in "pikes," as they are called in the north, to the detriment both of the hay and of the land, is one of the customs of the country against which Jove himself might strive in vain. The flax crop in the north is heavy, but the quality is not first class, and the price is poor.

#### THE HEALTH OF THE POTATO.

As for potatoes, opinions differ. On wet high lands the experts report that there is a great deal of blight, but the crop as a whole is good, although the quality is not so high as in previous years. There was a good deal of complaint as to the soapy, watery character of the earlier lifted champions, but all agreed that it would be impossible to estimate the value of the crop until Christmas. Much the most disquieting report on the subject was that which I received in the south from an eminent authority who for years has made a special study of potato disease. He told me that he feared that things were much worse than was generally believed. The potatoes which had come under his observation were not diseased, but they were full of the germs of the disease. The little woody knots in the potatoes that were being lifted were merely an undeveloped germ of the fungus, which would remain latent for a couple of months, and then destroy the tuber. In previous years he said he had some difficulty in procuring specimens of the deadly fungus in its latent condition. This year every potato he cut into was full of it. He hoped sincerely that he was wrong, but to the best of his belief the probability was that most of the potatoes in the south of Ireland would go bad in the pits at Christmas. He spoke with the authority of an expert who has made the development of the potato disease a subject of microscopic study for years; and, although I have heard no confirmation of his lugubrious vaticinations, there is too much antecedent probability of their accuracy for any one to dismiss them as baseless.\* But for the present we may

\* The Special Commissioner of the *Freeman*, writing on this subject at the beginning of December in Ulster, gives the following confirmation of this lugubrious forecast:—"The potato crop is universally admitted, even already, to be about half the value of the crop for 1885. This is understood to be the

disregard that frightful eventuality as being beyond the range of a survey which is limited to facts beyond dispute.

#### SOME HARVEST REPORTS.

The following series of market reports has been sent me by provincial newspapers circulating in the various country districts of Ireland:—

*Armagh Guardian*.—Crop above average, but harvest weather bad. Aggregate result slightly under average.

*Ballymoney Free Press*.—Grain, average; potatoes, one-third to one-half less.

*Coleraine Chronicle*.—Equal to average.

*Donegal Independent*.—Slightly above the average.

*Tuam Herald*.—Above the average, crop sound; potatoes good and without disease.

*Mayo Examiner*.—Good average.

*Connaught Telegraph*.—Hay, above; oats, medium; potatoes, below; turnips, fair.

*Ballina Herald*.—Above average.

*Sligo Independent*.—Above average; splendid hay crop.

*Dundalk and Newry Examiner*.—Grain crops, five barrels per acre less than last year.

*Cavan Weekly News*.—Hay above average, but much badly saved. Potatoes below, both in quantity and quality. Oats above, but large quantity injured by weather. Flax, average. Grain crops above average.

*Roscommon Herald*.—Considerably under the average, and much has been spoiled by recent heavy rains.

*Westmeath Independent*.—Over average. Hay abundant, but at low price. Slight improvement all round.

*Clare Examiner*.—Hay crop much damaged by continuous rains.]

*Clare Advertiser*.—Far below ordinary average.

*Limerick Reporter*.—Far below average. Potatoes inferior to last year.

*Cork Examiner*.—Harvest is the very worst since the year 1879. On account of the weather the hay and corn could not be saved, and large quantities found a place in the manure heap. Potatoes have not been a good crop, and are so scarce that thus early they bring 6d. for 14 lb.

*Cork Herald*.—The corn crops were seriously injured by rain just at the period of gathering. In this respect the harvest is deplorable in many districts of the South.

result of the very unfavourable weather and the backward season, but especially of the disastrous floods of the last three or four weeks. Throughout the entire valley of the Blackwater, and the valley of the Callan, the potato crop is either lying under water or cannot be stood upon. A small quantity recently dug out turned out to be utterly rotten, and in a state in which not even pigs would eat them. Even before the floods set in the blight was very generally observed on the stalks, and decay on the leaves, and it was hoped that the root would come rapidly to maturity before the disease wore down. The bad weather has given the disease its opportunity, so that the crop when gathered in and housed turns out defective in quality as well as yield. "Every time we pick them," said four or five farmers from Waringstown, "we find almost as many damaged as good." In asserting that the potato crop in Ulster is only half what it was last year, I do so on the authority of persons in opposite walks of life in widely different localities. The farmers consider a half crop an over-estimate, and the expression "potato famine" is in everybody's mouth. When it is borne in mind that in Eastern Ulster the potato is grown not merely for home consumption, but very largely for exportation to England, Wales, and the Mediterranean, the significance of the potato crop and its comparative failure can be the better appreciated.

*Kerry Sentinel.*—Harvest a fair average. Large quantity of oats lost by shedding, and remainder damaged by rain and storms.

*Londonderry Sentinel.*—Above the average in both quantity and quality.

*Leinster Times.*—Fair average. Quantity and quality greatly deteriorated by unfavourable weather.

*The People* (Wexford).—Far below average. Large areas of corn and hay have been badly saved; much has been lost altogether. Many farmers say they have not got enough for the land.

On the whole, so far as the harvest is concerned, we may fairly take it as up to the average. A member of the staff of the *Farm*, an excellent agricultural journal published in Dublin, estimated the harvest as 20 per cent. below average; but, although that might be correct for Munster, it is too low for the rest of Ireland. Quantity over average, quality and prices under, is probably as near the truth as we can get. Unless the potatoes go bad, the harvest may fairly be said to present no special reason for interfering with the rents fixed in 1881-5.

#### THE FALL IN PRICES.

The only ground upon which such a demand can be justified is the general falling off in the prices of agricultural produce. This is undoubtedly a factor of the first importance, and fortunately it can be ascertained with some approach to accuracy. Not scientific accuracy; for nothing is more hopeless than an attempt to ascertain the net value of the Irish crop from the market quotations which are given in the various newspapers from week to week. In England—thanks to the excellent system that prevails of recording the quantities and prices of all grain sold in the kingdom—it is possible to form a tolerably exact estimate of the value of the English corn crop. No such system prevails in Ireland, the Corn Returns Act not being in force across St. George's Channel. All that can be done, therefore, is to average the prices of the chief articles produced by Irish farmers. There is no Government Department in Dublin that concerns itself with the collection of prices of agricultural produce. On applying at the Board of Trade in London I was referred to the compilers of *Thom's Almanac*, and *Thom's Almanac* I was told in Dublin was compiled from the *Irish Farmers' Gazette*. This excellent journal holds a deservedly high place in both the agricultural and the journalistic world; and I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to its editor and manager for explaining the method by which they arrived at their figures. Every week they publish the official reports issued by the authorities in the Dublin and Cork markets. The reports of other markets are compiled from local newspapers circulating in the district, and therefore subject to local check against inaccuracy. From these returns the editor compiles "average prices" for the week, and compares them with the corresponding periods of the two preceding years. The prices which he takes are those of the Dublin market, with the exception of butter, in which case he takes the average between the quotations of "firsts" and "fourths" in Cork. By the aid of the figures thus compiled by the *Irish Farmers' Gazette*, it is possible to bring the average prices of Irish commodities down to the end of October; but here, again, a difficulty presents itself. The prices given in the "weekly averages" only strike the difference between the highest and lowest figures quoted in the market, and afford no indication whatever as to the quantities sold at either figure. It might easily happen that only 10 per cent. of the total yield brought the highest price, while 50

per cent. brought the lowest. The remainder would be distributed between the two extremes; but the average price of the crop would approximate much more closely to the lowest than to the highest figure quoted.

That, however, cannot be helped. There are no other statistics available, and we must do the best we can with those which we possess. What, then, is the truth about the fall in prices? Has it been such as to seriously impair the rent-paying capacity of the Irish farmer? Has it been abnormal beyond anything that could have been foreseen by the Land Court? Is it more than the ordinary fluctuations that have taken place since the Land Act was passed? The best way to answer these questions is to let the prices speak for themselves. We quote chiefly from the *Irish Farmers' Gazette*.

#### PRICES SINCE THE LAND ACT.

The following figures show the difference in the prices of the chief articles of Irish agricultural produce during the first four years of the Land Act and the years 1885-6:—

Per 12 lb.	1881.		1882.		1883.		1884.		Average for Four Years.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Wheat	10	2	9	9½	8	9½	7	5	9	0½
Oats	7	11½	7	2½	7	9½	6	6	7	4½
Barley	7	9	7	10½	7	7½	7	4½	7	3
Butter	96	6	103	0	96	0	115	0	103	9
Beef	63	9	63	6	70	0	70	0	63	0
Mutton	79	6	81	6	91	0	80	6	83	1½
Pork	55	0	56	0	53	0	45	0	52	3
Potatoes	4	0	3	7	4	4	3	5	3	10
Wool	1	0½	0	10½	0	9½	0	10½	0	11
Hay	4	4	3	6	3	6	5	3	4	1½
Straw	3	2	2	4	2	0	2	1½	2	7
Eggs (per 120)	9	6	9	0	9	0	9	5	9	2½

Per 12 lb.	1885.		1886 till Aug.		Last Week Sept.		Last Week Oct.		Percentage of Fall on average 1881-4.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Wheat	8	6	6	8½	6	2½	6	1½	6	26
Oats	8	0	6	4½	6	8½	6	3¾	+	13½
Barley	7	5	6	6	—	—	6	3	3	15
Butter	75	6	71	9½	83	4½	90	8	27	30
Beef	56	6	55	4	49	3	47	6	17	18½
Mutton	65	5	67	4	63	0	66	2	21	19
Pork	46	6	41	6	40	0	44	0	11	20½
Potatoes	2	7	3	3	2	6	2	5	33	15
Wool	0	8	0	8½	0	9½	0	10	27	22½
Hay	3	7	3	4	2	8	2	10	14	20
Straw	3	0	2	1	2	11	2	1	+	10
Eggs (per 120)	9	6	7	11	9	0	9	10½	+	14

The last average compiled by the *Irish Farmers' Gazette* does not come down later than the end of August. I add the prices given in the same journal for the last week in the two following months, but the percentages of loss are only brought down to August.

From the above table it will be seen that the fall in agricultural values has been all round. A slight rise in oats and in straw in 1885 constitutes the only exceptions.

#### PRICES SINCE 1846.

The years 1881-4 were not high-priced years. Compared with the years before 1879, they were years of very moderate prices. This comes out very clearly in the next table, in which the comparison is made between the prices of 1885 and 1886 and those of forty years from 1846 up to and including 1885. The Registrar-General, who was the first witness examined by Lord Cowper's Commission, furnished me with an interesting table of maximal and minimal prices for the last forty years. In computing the average for 1826-1885, the low prices of

1885 are taken into account. Had this not been done the percentage of fall would have been still greater:—

	Average prices for 40 years, 1846-85.	1885.		1886. To Aug.		Fall in 1885.		Fall in 1886.	
		s.	d.	s.	d.	per cent.	per cent.		
per 112 lb.									
Wheat .....	10 10	8	6	6	8½	21½	38½		
Oats .....	7 7	8	0	6	4¼	+	16		
Barley .....	8 1	7	5	6	6	8½	19½		
Butter .....	101 4	75	6	71	9½	25½	29		
Beef .....	63 1	56	6	55	4	12	12		
Mutton .....	68 4	65	5	67	4	4¼	1½		
Pork .....	50 3	46	6	41	6	7¼	17½		
Potatoes .....	4 4	2	7	3	3	40	25		
Wool.....	1 3	0	8	0	8½	46½	43		
Hay .....	3 9	3	7	3	4	4½	11		
Straw .....	2 1	3	0	2	1	+	0		
Eggs (per 120)...	6 6	8	6	7	11	+	—		

Here, again, it is evident that the prices of 1885 and 1886 are far below any prices which the Land Court could have anticipated as likely to rule in Ireland.

#### WHAT LOSS DOES THIS REPRESENT? I. IN CROPS.

Percentages, however, are misleading and confusing. It will be more helpful to calculate what amount of loss in our Irish farm this depreciation in prices represents. Supposing the yield of crops has remained stationary, the following will be an approximate estimate of the effect on Irish farmers of the fall in prices:—

	Cwt.	Average 1881-84.	1885.	1886.
Wheat .....	1,000,000	452,000	425,000	310,000
Oats .....	18,000,000	6,637,500	7,200,000	5,787,500
Barley .....	3,000,000	1,150,000	1,112,000	975,000
Cereals...	.....	8,239,500	8,737,000	7,072,500
Potatoes ...	60,000,000	11,500,000	7,750,000	9,750,000
Hay .....	80,000,000	16,500,000	14,300,000	13,300,000
Grand total .....	.....	£36,239,500	£30,787,000	£30,122,500

That represents a falling off of six millions per annum, or about half the rental of Ireland, in the value of the five chief agricultural products of Ireland, assuming that the annual output has remained stationary—and it certainly has not increased. This, however, only shows a small part of the loss.

#### II.—IN LIVE STOCK.

The depreciation of price has told with disastrous effect upon the live stock of the farm. Here, of course, the endless diversity of quality in cattle and sheep renders comparison difficult, if not impossible. But some idea may be formed of the fall in the value by comparing the prices at Ballinasloe great October fair for the last six years. The prices of eight varieties of cattle and eight varieties of sheep are given for each year in the "Irish Farmers' Almanac," which may be regarded as the nearest approach to an official publication on this subject that there is to be found in Ireland. The prices this year at Ballinasloe average £1 per head lower all round for cattle than the previous year, and from 5s. to 9s., or say an average of 7s. 6d. per head, higher for sheep. Taking the numbers of cattle and sheep from the Registrar-General's returns, and calculating their value

at the Ballinasloe average, we have the following result:—

	Numbers.	Price.	Total.	Decrease since 1881-84.
	1881-84.	£ s. d.		
Cattle.....	4,038,387	16 13 0	£67,239,143	
Sheep.....	3,198,116	2 10 0	7,995,290	
			£75,234,433	
	1885.			In 1885.
Cattle.....	4,228,751	11 6 3	47,837,745	
Sheep.....	3,477,840	1 18 0	6,607,896	
			£54,445,641	£20,788,792
	1886.			In 1886.
Cattle.....	4,184,027	10 6 3	42,147,778	
Sheep.....	3,367,722	5 6	7,661,567	
			£49,809,345	£25,425,088

Supposing that only a third of the live stock of the farm is sold every year—one-sixth of all the cattle and one-eighth of all the sheep leave the country annually for England—this represents a loss of £7,000,000 in 1885 and about £8,000,000 in 1886. Even if we allow 50 per cent. off this for calves, milch cows, and lambs, this would still show a loss of £3,500,000 in 1885 and £4,000,000 in 1886. Of course this cannot be taken as approximating to scientific accuracy. The value of such calculations is solely comparative. It is impossible to discriminate between lambs and sheep, between calves and oxen. But as the proportion between the classes would not vary from year to year, the figures, although excessive as to the totals, afford a rough indication of the extent to which the depreciation has affected the Irish farmers. Horses have as a whole maintained their price. Pigs, however, have fallen in price 11 per cent. in 1885 and 20 per cent. in 1886 on the average of 1881-4. This amount is a loss of from £500,000 in 1885 to £900,000 in 1886.

#### III. BUTTER AND WOOL.

The only remaining products of the Irish farm that have to be taken into account are butter and wool. No statistics are published as to the annual yield of either commodity. But the value of the butter crop is currently reported to be £6,000,000 per annum, and the output of Irish wool can be guessed by taking the annual clip at the English average of 4 lb. per sheep. As Ireland has in round numbers three million sheep, this gives us 12 million lb. of wool, which at the prices ruling from 1881-4 would bring in £550,000. At the prices of 1885 it would be worth but £400,000, at those of the first eight months of 1886 £425,000. It is more difficult to estimate the net loss occasioned by the fall in butter. Taking £6,000,000 as the average annual value of Irish butter for 1881-4, there was a drop of 27 per cent. in 1885 and of 30 per cent. in 1886, up to August, at the time when most of the butter is sold. This would represent a loss of £1,620,000 on the butter of 1885 and of £1,800,000 on the butter of 1886.

#### WHAT THE IRISH FARMER HAS LOST IN TWO YEARS.

In attempting to compile from the foregoing figures as to the probable actual loss suffered by the Irish farmer, it would be obviously absurd to estimate his loss by adding them all together. Most of his hay and potatoes go to market not as hay or potatoes, but as beef and butter and pork. Compared with the quantity that is grown, a very

small proportion of either hay or potatoes ever comes to market. To a much less extent this is true of cereals. In estimating the total losses of the two years 1885-86, I will eliminate altogether the items of hay and potatoes. The figures will then show somewhat as follows:—

Loss on average of 1881-4.	1885.	1886.	Total on two years.
Cereals .....	—	£1,167,000	£669,500
Wool.....	£150,000	125,000	275,000
Butter .....	1,640,000	2,000,000	3,640,000
Pork .....	500,000	.900,000	1,400,000
Cattle and sheep .....	3,500,000	4,000,000	7,500,000
	5,790,000	8,192,000	13,484,500
Increase.			
Cereals .....	497,500		
	£5,292,500		

This does not pretend to be more than a very rough calculation that assuredly does not err on the side of exaggeration, only 25 per cent. of the total depreciation in the value of cattle and sheep being charged each year, and no allowance whatever being made for the low prices of hay and potatoes. But it enables us to form some idea of the justice of the farmer's demand for the abatement of rent.

#### WHAT THIS MEANS IN RENT.

The Irish farmer has to pay a sum variously estimated at from ten to fifteen millions per annum in rent. If we average it at 12½ millions the fall in prices has about wiped out in two years a sum equal to a whole year's rent. That is to say, if the Irish tenant were to pay one year's rent for the last two years, the fall in prices would wipe out the other year's rent and leave him *in statu quo*. It may be taken as indubitable that a heavy, unforeseen, and all-round fall has materially diminished the resources from which the farmers of Ireland pay their rent. It will not be regarded as an outside estimate that the value of the gross produce sold by the farmer has gone down 25 per cent. since the judicial rents were fixed. I am willing, however, for the sake of moderation to admit that 20 per cent. would cover the total diminution of the gold value of Irish crops caused by the present fall in prices. If a system of barter prevailed, and prices were not estimated in gold values, the farmers of Ireland could pay their rents as well to-day as ever they did. Take the case, for instance, of a dairy farm in the neighbourhood of Cork. Its rent fixed in 1882 is, let us say, £10, which the farmer paid in that year by selling 200 lb. of butter in the Cork market. Butter, however, has fallen 20 per cent. in value. When he takes his 200 lb. of butter to Cork market instead of receiving £10 as he did in 1882 he only receives £8. What is he to do? His landlord's claims can no longer be satisfied by the production of 200 lb. of butter. He must make 25 per cent. more butter in order to make up for a 20 per cent. fall in the price. That is to say, he must sell 250 lb. of butter this year before he can raise the £10 which he received by selling only 200 lb. in 1882.

The Irish farmer could pay his rent if it had been fixed in produce.\* He cannot pay it because it is fixed in gold. Gold is dearer now than it was in 1881-4, and it takes

more oats, more potatoes, more beef, more pork, and more butter to buy a sovereign to-day than it did two years ago. Every one admits this, but few realize what it means to the men who have to pay. Here is a table showing it in figures:—

	Cwt.	Price.	1846-1885.	Price.	1881-4.	Price.	1886.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Wheat ..	100,000	10 10	54,166	9 0	45,000	6 8	33,333
Oats .....	2,000,000	7 7	758,333	7 4	733,333	6 4	633,333
Barley ..	300,000	8 1	121,250	7 8	115,000	6 6	97,500
Hay ....	3,800,000	3 9	712,500	4 1	715,833	3 4	633,333
Potatoes ..	3,000,000	4 4	650,000	3 10	575,000	3 3	487,500
Beef ...	1,200,000	63 1	3,785,000	68 0	4,030,000	55 4	3,320,000
Mutton ..	500,000	68 4	1,708,333	83 1/2	2,073,125	67 4	1,683,333
Pork ....	500,000	50 3	1,256,250	52 3	1,306,250	41 6	1,137,500
Butter ..	200,000	101 4	1,013,333	103 9	1,037,500	71 9	717,500
							8,743,332
							10,050,165
							11,600,000

This table shows very clearly the net difference to the farmer of a produce and of a gold rent. Compared with the series of forty years from 1846-1885, a produce rent would this year leave the landlord with 13½ per cent. short of his old rental. Prices, however, were very low forty years ago, and a better comparison is with the prices of the four years 1881-4, during which most of the judicial rents were fixed. This year a produce rent would leave the landlord 20 per cent. short. Unfortunately for the farmer, the duty of converting produce into gold devolves upon him, not upon the landlord. The consequence is that it costs him more than 20 per cent. additional produce to meet the landlord's demands. That is to say—the fall in prices of agricultural produce or the rise in the value of gold has been equivalent to an increase of more than 20 per cent. on the judicial rents since they were fixed in 1881-4. That is what it means in produce, comparing what the farmer has to sell this year (1) with what he had to sell at the average of the last forty years, and (2) what he had to sell at the average of the first four years of the Land Act.

	1846-1885.			1881-4.		
	Quantity.	Price.	Value.	Quantity.	Price.	Value.
Wheat.....	Cwt.	s. d.	£	Cwt.	s. d.	£
Oats.....	2,000,000	7 7	758,333	2,000,000	7 4	733,333
Barley ..	300,000	8 1	121,250	300,000	7 8	115,000
Hay ....	3,800,000	3 9	712,500	3,570,000	4 1	714,500
Potatoes ..	3,000,000	4 4	650,000	3,000,000	3 10	575,000
Beef .....	1,200,000	63 1	3,785,000	1,100,000	68 0	3,740,000
Mutton ..	500,000	68 4	1,708,333	425,000	83 4	1,770,833
Pork .....	500,000	50 3	1,256,250	500,000	52 3	1,306,250
Butter ..	200,000	101 4	1,013,333	200,000	103 9	1,037,500
	11,600,000		10,050,165	11,145,000		10,046,499

\* This is said to be the opinion of Sir Redvers Buller and of Sir Henry Robinson.

	1886.		
	Quantity.	Price.	Value.
Wheat .....	Cwt.	s. d.	£
Oats .....	140,000	6 8	46,660
Barley .....	2,320,000	6 4	734,666
Hay .....	350,000	6 6	113,750
Potatoes .....	4,200,000	3 4	705,000
Beef .....	3,759,000	3 3	609,375
Mutton .....	1,325,000	55 4	3,665,833
Pork .....	550,000	67 4	1,851,666
Butter .....	535,000	41 6	1,213,875
	260,000	71 9	932,750
	13,480,000		9,868,581

The increase is better shown if we throw out the increases into tabular form. The net effect of the fall in prices in 1886 is that the Irish farmer must produce in addition to what would have paid his rent—

	Increased Tribute to Landlord in 1886.	
	Over the years 1881-4.	Over the years 1846-85.
	cwt.	cwt.
Wheat.....	20,000	40,000
Oats .....	320,000	320,000
Barley .....	50,000	50,000
Hay .....	700,000	400,000
Potatoes .....	750,000	750,000
Beef.....	225,000	125,000
Mutton .....	125,000	50,000
Pork .....	85,000	85,000
Butter .....	60,000	60,000
	2,335,000	1,880,000

To make this still more palpable it may be said that the mere fall in prices, without any other cause, cost the tenants an addition to their rent of nearly 20,000 tons of grain, 35,000 tons of hay, 37,500 tons of potatoes, 672,000 lb. of butter, 7,000 fat pigs, 18,750 sheep, and 22,500 fat cattle. Where was this vast additional impost to come from? The soil of Ireland had not been made so much more productive\* as to yield these additional quantities of grain, potatoes, and hay, nor have the flocks and herds multiplied with such abnormal rapidity as to enable the tenant to supply this additional tax without difficulty. Where did these thousands of fat beasts come from? The peasant will tell you, "They came from my shinbone."

#### HOW OUGHT THIS TO AFFECT RENT?

The fall in prices is thus proved to amount to about 20 per cent. on the articles of produce on the sale of which the Irish farmer most depends. How ought that to affect his rent? What reduction does it justify? Twenty per cent. off the selling value of his crops—ought it to carry with it 20 per cent. off his rent—and when I say rent I always refer to his judicial rent fixed in 1881-4, which is on an average about 20 per cent. below the old rent? Or would it justify a demand for more than 20 per cent. reduction? In order to answer this question it is necessary to examine how a fall in the prices of his produce affects the farmer. I will first take the small man. As a rule he does not keep balance-sheets, but by the kindness of one of the most competent authorities on Irish agriculture I am able to give three or four balance-sheets of small farms of different descriptions which throw considerable light upon the subject.

No. 1 is a small farm of eleven statute acres in Carlow. The tenant and his wife and four children do nearly all the labour on the land. They live chiefly upon the pro-

duce of their holding, and the entry "Profit" represents the value of the proportion of the crops which they consume, as well as any balance remaining over after selling the residue:—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produce of Farm... £66 0 0	Rent ..... £8 0 0
	Labour ..... 6 0 0
	Seed, manure, &c. 15 0 0
	Miscellaneous ..... 5 0 0
	Profit ..... 32 0 0
	£66 0 0
	£66 0 0

Suppose the value of this man's produce drops 20 per cent. He will only have £52 10s. instead of £66 out of which to pay. Supposing that his rent remains the same, and that he has to pay as much as before for his seeds, manure, labour, &c., he will only have a balance of profit of £18 10s. instead of a balance of £32. In this case, therefore, even if he were to have his rent remitted altogether, he would be £5 10s. worse off at the end of the year than he was before prices fell.

It is, however, misleading to argue as if the fall in prices affected the whole produce of the farm. It only affects that portion of the produce which is taken to market. Whatever the tenant consumes himself is entirely unaffected by the rise and fall of prices. It is difficult to estimate exactly what proportion of the item "profit" represents home consumption and what proportion represents the stock turned into money in order to enable him to buy tea, whisky, newspapers, clothes, and boots, and to pay the priest his dues. In this case, if the proportion consumed without being sold is put at 75 per cent. of the profit, it is probably not far from the mark. That is to say, the tenant eats £24 worth of the crop which he grows, and sells £8 worth for his own use. That leaves £42 worth of crops at the old price to be actually turned into money. It is this £42 which alone is affected by the 20 per cent. drop in values. The account therefore will stand thus:—

Produced and eaten on farm .....	Consumed without being sold.....
£24 0 0	£24 0 0
Produced and sold £42, less 20 per cent. = £32.....	Rent ..... 8 0 0
34 0 0	Labour ..... 6 0 0
	Seed, manure, &c. 15 0 0
	Miscellaneous ... 5 0 0
	Tenant's profit..... 0 0 0
	£32 0 0
	£58 0 0
	£58 0 0

In this case a fall of 20 per cent. on the proportion of the crop sold amounts to a loss of 25 per cent. to the tenant. If the loss were to be equally divided between landlord and tenant each would lose £4. But £4 is 50 per cent. of the landlord's rent, and only 12½ per cent. of the tenant's profit. That seems monstrous, yet that is what an equal division of the actual loss would amount to between the two parties.

No. 2. Take another case. This is a smaller farm of six acres of better land. Its balance-sheet is as follows:—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produce..... £62 0 0	Rent ..... £9 0 0
	Labour ..... 4 0 0
	Seed, manure, &c. 19 0 0
	Profit ..... 30 0 0
	£62 0 0
	£62 0 0

Here, if we allow 75 per cent. of the tenant's profit to be represented by the unsold produce which he and his

\* On the contrary, the live stock has diminished (see page 31).

family consume, and deduct 20 per cent. for the value of the sold portion, we have this result :—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produced and eaten on farm £22 10 0	Consumed without being sold £22 10 0
Produced and sold £39 10s., less 20 per cent. (7 18s.) 31 12 0	Rent 9 0 0
Net loss ..... 0 8 0	Labour 4 0 0
	Seed, manure, &c. 19 0 0
	<hr/>
	£54 10 0
	<hr/>

In this case the fall in price entails a loss of £7 18s., which, if borne entirely by the farmer, reduces his profit by 26½ per cent. If it is divided equally, the landlord will lose 44 per cent. of his rent, the tenant 13½ per cent. of his profit.

No. 3. This is a larger farm of sixteen Irish acres of poorer land :—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produce..... £53 0 0	Rent ..... £10 0 0
	Labour 6 0 0
	Seeds, manure, &c. 8 0 0
	Profit ..... 29 0 0
	<hr/>
	£53 0 0

Following the principle laid down above, the amended balance-sheet is as follows :—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produced and eaten on farm £22 0 0	Consumed without being sold £22 0 0
Produced and sold £31, less 20 p. c. = £6 } 25 0 0	Rent 10 0 0
	Labour 6 0 0
	Seeds, manure, &c. 8 0 0
	Tenant's profit ..... 1 0 0
	<hr/>
	£47 0 0

Here the 20 per cent. fall represents almost exactly 20 per cent. loss to the tenant. If the £6 is divided equally between landlord and tenant the former will lose 30 per cent. of his rent, the latter 11 per cent. of his profits.

No. 4. This is very poor land, being 11 acres of Sligo reclaimed bog, very stony and not drained :—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produce..... £30 10 0	Rent ..... £3 16 0
	Seeds, manure, &c. 8 0 0
	Profit ..... 18 14 0
	<hr/>
	£30 10 0

In this case the proportion unsold would be probably higher, say 80 per cent. At that rate the amended balance-sheet would stand thus :—

Produced and eaten £15 0 0	Consumed unsold... £15 0 0
Produced and sold £15 10 0	Rent 3 16 0
Less 20 per ct. 3 0 0	Seeds, &c. 8 0 0
	Profit ..... 0 14 0
	<hr/>
	12 10 0
	<hr/>

£27 10 0

Here the fall of 20 per cent. in price only costs the tenant 17 per cent. If it were shared equally between landlord and tenant, it would reduce the rent by nearly 40 per cent., while the tenant would only lose 8½ per cent.

No. 5. This was a farm of 10 acres of bad, rocky land in Mayo :—

Produce.	Expenditure.
Potatoes, 10 tons at 40s. £20 0 0	Rent ..... £2 0 0
Oats ..... 3 12 0	Pig food ..... 3 0 0
Milk and Butter ... 5 0 0	Profit ..... 23 12 0
	<hr/>
	£28 12 0

Probably 90 per cent. of the tenant's share of the produce in this case was unsold. At this rate the amended balance-sheet would be as follows :—

Produce eaten, unsold £21 5 0	Consumed unsold... £21 5 0
Produce sold £7 7 0	Rent ..... 2 0 0
Less 20 p.c. 1 9 6	Pig food ..... 3 0 0
	Profit ..... 0 17 6
	<hr/>
	£27 2 6

Here the 20 per cent. fall in prices only represents a loss to the tenant of 7 per cent. If it were equally divided, the landlord would lose 35 per cent. and the tenant only about 3 per cent.

If we summarize these cases we have the following table as to different way in which the fall in price would affect the five different holdings :—

Holding.	Acres.	Rent.	Proportion of Rent to produce.	Effect of 20 per cent. fall in prices.	
				Borne solely by tenant.	Divided equally. Land lord. Tenan t.
No. 1 .....	11	£8 0 0	1 in 8	25 per c.	50 12½
No. 2 .....	6	9 0 0	1 in 7	26½ , , ,	44 13½
No. 3 .....	16	10 0 0	1 in 5	20 , , ,	30 11
No. 4 .....	11	3 16 0	1 in 8	17 , , ,	40 8½
No. 5 .....	10	2 0 0	1 in 14	7 , , ,	35 3

The larger the proportion of produce consumed on the farm, the less loss, of course, there is by the fall in prices. The above five actual balance-sheets show how difficult it is to generalize concerning the effect which a 20 per cent. fall in price should have on the rent. If the net fall on the produce actually sold is divided equally between the two partners, the landlord in all such cases as the above, where he draws only one-fifth or one-fourteenth of the produce as rent, will be mulcted in from 30 to 50 per cent. reduction.

#### ITS EFFECT ON LARGER FARMS.

If we take the case of larger farms, where a much larger proportion of the produce is sold, and much more money spent in farming, the effect of the fall is as follows :—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produce..... £1,056 0 0	Rent ..... £350 0 0
	Labour ..... 170 0 0
	Seeds, manure, oilcake, &c.... 285 0 0
	Profit ..... 251 0 0
	<hr/>
	£1,056 0 0

Here the proportion of stuff consumed on the farm is probably not more than 30 per cent. of the tenant's profit. The amended balance-sheet will therefore show as follows :—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produce consumed, not sold £75 0 0	Produce consumed by tenant ..... £75 0 0
Produce sold, £981 (less 20 per cent. = £785) ..... 785 0 0	Rent ..... 350 0 0
	Labour ..... 170 0 0
	Seeds, &c. .... 285 0 0
	<hr/>
	£880 0 0

On this farm a drop of 20 per cent. in the prices of the produce sold would bring the tenant's profit down from

£251 to £55, a loss of 78 per cent. If the net loss on the fall of £196 were divided equally between the landlord and tenant the former would lose 28 per cent. of his rent, the latter 39 per cent. of his profit. The land in this case only made three rents, more than the landlord's rent being spent in manure, feeding stuffs, &c.

Take another case in which the farm is about the same size:—

Receipts.	Expenditure.
Produce..... £1,300 0 0	Rent..... £350 0 0
	Labour..... 130 0 0
	Manure, &c. .... 430 0 0
	Profit ..... 390 0 0
<hr/> £1,300 0 0	<hr/> £1,300 0 0

Here 20 per cent. of the tenant's profit would represent unsold produce consumed on the farm. The fall in prices would thus affect the former.

#### RECEIPTS.

Produce consumed, unsold .....	£78 0 0
Produce sold..... £1,222 0 0	
Less 20 per cent..... 244 0 0	
	<hr/> 978 0 0

#### EXPENDITURE.

Produce consumed by tenant .....	£78 0 0
Rent ... .....	350 0 0
Labour .....	130 0 0
Seeds, manure, &c. ....	430 0 0
Profit .....	68 0 0
	<hr/> £1,056 0 0

In this case 20 per cent. represents a loss of £244, or 63 per cent., to the tenant—if divided equally, of 35 per cent. to the landlord and of 31 per cent. to the tenant.

Take a third case in which the rent is £400:—

Average Receipts—1881-4.	Expenditure.
Produce ..... £1,560 0 0	Rent ..... £400 0 0
	Wages..... 260 0 0
	Manure and seed. 400 0 0
	Feeding stuff, &c. 200 0 0
	Profit ..... 300 0 0
<hr/> £1,560 0 0	<hr/> £1,560 0 0

The effect of a fall of 20 per cent. on this farm would entirely wipe out the rent altogether. If the sum which 20 per cent. fall represents were equally divided between landlord and tenant, it would represent a reduction of 36 per cent. to the landlord and 48 per cent. to the tenant.

The presence of a large factor equal to or exceeding the landlord's rent, in the shape of payment for labour, manure, seeds, &c., increases immensely the effect of the 20 per cent. drop on the price of the whole produce, by limiting the area on which the whole force of the reduction falls. Hence farmers who employ much labour, and incur a heavy outlay of capital in manures and in feeding stuffs, are much more heavily hit than the smaller men, who spend little or nothing in labour and manures.

Unfortunately, it is by no means these men who receive the most consideration from their landlords. The Irish landlord too often insists upon mulcting most those who can afford it least. Again and again have I heard of cases in which landlords have refused to make any abatement to a large tenant when they cheerfully made abatements to smaller men on each side of him.\* Yet a

moment's consideration would show that the bigger man is of necessity worse hit by a fall of prices than his smaller neighbour. To begin with, he sells almost all his produce, whereas his poorer neighbour sells only a small portion of his crops, and by consuming the most of them himself only partially feels the effect of the depression, the impact of which falls with full force on his bigger neighbour. Then not only is the net amount of money lost much larger, but the amount of expenditure that cannot be reduced is much greater, so that the margin within which the fall operates is proportionately narrower. If the tenant only makes in a good year a profit of one-fifth of his gross produce, a fall of 20 per cent. in the value would represent a loss of 100 per cent. of the profit.

#### THE IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM OF SUBSISTENCE.

The proportion by which 20 per cent. depreciation in agricultural prices should affect rents is subject to the reservation that the landlord can draw no rent at all until the tenant, who has no other means of maintenance but his land, has at least produced sufficient to keep body and soul together. What that minimum is I am not called upon to decide. All that it is necessary to maintain is that there is such a minimum. To maintain an Irish pauper, taking an average man and woman and child in a workhouse, costs nearly 3s. a week, exclusive of clothing. Suppose we add another shilling a week for clothes and everything else, it is evident that no Irish farm, whose tenant has no other means of subsistence, can possibly pay rent at all until it has at least provided its occupant with £10 per annum to keep him living. I make no allowance for his family. It is not necessary from this point of view that he should have any family. The landlord's rent can claim no priority to that irreducible minimum, not even if the Irish tenant were the absolute property of his landlord. Hence when the 20 per cent. fall in prices brings the profit of the tenant within that irreducible minimum, all rent of necessity ceases. I may say once more that I am now and always speaking solely of those holdings which are strictly agricultural, whose occupants have no other means of livelihood, whether from harvesting, fishing, or any occupation beyond the produce of their farm. The ability of occupants who earn their

£650—Griffith's valuation, £450. The two last half-years got same abatements as other tenants, 20 per cent., and I did not get reduction other years when all other tenants on the property did. The agent ordered a valuator to go over all the property and value it. The valuer reported that £100 a year should be taken off my farm; but not only was this not done, but I was not allowed reductions given to other tenants. I may say this only as a sample of how I am treated by my other landlords: they say to me, "As long as you have cattle you must pay," though I have no other way of making rent than that of any other farmer in my country. I have paid a great portion of my rents for the three last years out of capital. In one case a landlord allows small tenants 20 to 25 per cent. and allows me 15. He says my farm is so much better. He is right; but it was my father and myself for the last thirty years topdressed and drained, did all farm buildings, and carried the dung seven English miles to the farm. Were I to go into the Land Court I would get no credit for all his improvement, but may get my rent increased. That is the way in which the improving farmer is encouraged. Up to this time I cannot get my landlords to treat me as they do the smaller tenants, with one exception. From another of my landlords I hold 160 acres; Government valuation £285, rent £380; gave all others 20 per cent. off, and to me 1c per cent., as I resided on farm, and as he considered for a man who lived as I did I should not get the same reduction as others, and I have no other way of making rent off the farm than any other tenant on the estate.

\* This story describes the case of a large farmer in Munster. He writes:—My case is this. I farm 1,500 acres of land; from one landlord I hold 325 Irish acres of land: present rent,

living by working outside their holdings to pay rent is no more affected by the fall in prices, except indirectly, than the rent-paying ability of the tenant of a Wimbledon villa is affected by the diminished value of the produce of his kitchen garden.

#### WHAT SPLITTING THE DIFFERENCE MEANS.

Assuming that it is accepted in principle that landlord and tenant should split the loss between them, the following would be the reduction of rent that would be entailed under the following conditions when the whole of the produce of the land was taken to market and sold :—

Proportion of rent to total produce.	Extent to which rent should be cut to meet one-half the loss caused by 20 per cent. fall in prices.
One-tenth.....	100 per cent.
One-eighth .....	80 "
One-sixth.....	60 "
One-fifth .....	50 "
One-fourth .....	40 "
One-third.....	33 "
One-half .....	20 "

It being always understood that the landlord can only begin to claim rent at all after the tenant has made sufficient to keep him alive—a sum which I put, for the sake of illustration, at the irreducible minimum of £10 for the year, or its equivalent in potatoes. There are many farmers in Ireland who have not made even that this year.

#### CAN THE OTHER CHARGES NOT BE REDUCED?

The foregoing calculation assumes that the only items in the expenditure of the farmer which can be appreciably reduced are his own profit and his landlord's rent. This will be contested, and I am willing to admit that the fall in prices has to some extent brought a set-off to the farmer in the shape of cheaper manure and cheaper seeds, and of course the bread that he has had to buy has cost him less. But even if we allow that the farmer has reaped the full benefit of the fall in prices—which he has not, for he is mostly in debt, and pays the penalty of his position in being the last to profit by the fall and the first to lose by a rise—this would go but a short way towards reducing his loss. Rates have risen, taxes have risen, and above all labour is dearer than before. The cost of repairs and of all the implements which he buys in the local market has not fallen appreciably. And as times have become worse credit has been tighter—that is to say, the interest on his debts has been higher, and this suffices to deprive him of any advantage which he might gain from the fall of prices in the retail market. It should never be forgotten that the farmer buys retail and sells wholesale. Hence he feels the drop as a seller long before he enjoys it as a buyer. As a matter of fact, the Irish tenant is not buying anything 20 per cent. cheaper than he paid for it two years ago. How, then, does he pay his way? The question admits of three answers. In the first place, he often does not pay his way at all, and is a hopelessly broken man. In the second place, he often pays his rent by getting into debt, and in the third place—and this is the most common method—he pays his way by ceasing to buy manure or to employ labour, by deteriorating the land, and by selling the cattle necessary to stock his holding. This practice of feeding the landlord with slices cut out of the landlord's loins is general all over Ireland—to the immense detriment of the property of the landlords and the welfare of the labouring community.

#### AN UNDER-ESTIMATE OF THE FARMER'S LOSSES.

I have purposely under-estimated the losses of the farmer. The average drop of 20 per cent. is calculated

on the best prices in the largest markets. The lower qualities in the smaller markets have suffered much more severely. One of the best authorities in Ireland reminds me that the "small farmer and the poor man almost always sell to disadvantage, they can't wait, the creditor is at the door, there can be no reserve, so large quantities from these classes go at the lowest prices." One of the largest farmers in the neighbourhood of Dublin, whose pride it has been for nearly forty years to keep the most accurate accounts concerning every item of expenditure and every variation in the price of produce, writes me :—"Roughly I should say that if you tot up the price of every article of farm produce you will find that the total has not been so low for fifty years as it is at present, and that the prices this year are 20 per cent. below those of 1884." One of the largest and most skilled agriculturists, farming in the most approved style a large farm close to the great market of Cork, showed me his balance-sheets for the last six years. Rent and taxes stand him nearly £1,000 a year, and the total annual turn over is between £4,000 and £5,000. After allowing 6 per cent. interest on a stock valued at £3,300 in 1879 and £5,500 in 1885, the following is the net profit on this farm :—

	Profit.	Loss.
1879 .....	.....	£346
1880 .....	£768	.....
1881 .....	342	.....
1882 .....	839	.....
1883 .....	753	.....
1884 .....	749	.....
1885 .....	—	.....
	—	915
	£3,451	£1,261

Net profit on seven years ..... £2,190 = £313 per annum.

The loss on this year is not likely to fall below the loss of 1885. If this farmer cannot make it pay this year, who can make farming pay? He is shrewd, energetic, enterprising. He deals solely in cash. He has no bad debts and no over-drawn accounts. Yet at the prices of 1885 the net result was a loss of £915, after adding interest on stock, which was equal to a loss of £590 when no interest was allowed. He has asked for an abatement on his rent, and he has received in reply a writ! If such a tenant could meet with such a response, what may the smaller fry expect?

#### A PATHETIC PICTURE.

The severity with which the poorer tenant, especially in Munster, has been hit this year is as yet most imperfectly comprehended by the public. Perhaps the following pathetic picture of the fierce struggle for existence which is going on in these regions may let a glimpse of light in upon the dark obscure in which these poor fellows are labouring to make their rent—and labouring in vain. I quote from the *Cork Examiner* :—

Thursday being the first day during the season for purchasing malting barley in this district by the Midleton Distillery Company, early on that morning carts laden with barley came from different parts of the county. As far as the chapel, loads of barley were closely arranged on either side of the road, and the poor men, who came a long distance in inclement weather, could be seen asleep on the bags of barley. There were upwards of 1,000 loads of barley, on an average 8,000 barrels; a barrel is two hundredweight. Of course the Distillery Company could not buy all this grain, as it would take a week to weigh such a number of loads. The excitement which prevailed during the early part of Friday and during the day caused a party of constabulary to be called out to keep order and protect the lives of those who had to be out on business. After all, the top price was only 10s. per

barrel for malting barley; a great quantity was purchased at 7s. per barrel, and lots of it was rejected as being unfit for any use but food for cattle and pigs. On Friday the Distillery Company refused to buy any more barley. There is no other market convenient, and up to 7,000 barrels of barley will have to be taken back from Midleton.

Just imagine what this means. For what after all did the fortunate few secure for their barley? In the forty years previous the average price of barley was 16s. 2d. per barrel. This year, according to the rates on which we have based our calculations, that there has been a drop of 20 per cent. in agricultural prices, it is quoted at 13s. But at Midleton the choicest lots only brought 10s. a barrel—the bulk that was sold brought 7s., or 3s. 6d. per cwt., 5½d. per stone of 14 lb., while seven-eighths of the whole could not be sold even at that price. And for that these weary, ill-fed peasants trudged twenty miles in stormy weather across the country, only to have to trudge back again with their barley unsold and no money for the rent. As the poor fellows lie sleeping on their worthless barley sacks in the street under the inclement sky, dreaming mayhap of coming eviction, it is difficult altogether to accept the declarations of Loyal and Patriotic Unionists concerning the halcyon prosperity of the Irish peasants. For what does barley at 7s. a barrel mean? Here is a calculation by a competent reporter who has contributed some valuable articles on the state of the country to the *Cork Herald*:

Let us consider the expense of tilling one acre of ground. The seed required will cost at least fifteen shillings, ploughing will cost four shillings, harrowing, grubbing, or, where done, second ploughing, will swallow up two florins. Add then rent—say, one pound an acre—and before the farmer can claim as his own, or, rather before he can lay aside for the bank or shopkeeper, one single penny, that acre must bring him £2 3s. But does it? Judging from present prices, let us see. Let 9s. stand as the average price. An acre, yielding four barrels, will then bring 36s.; an acre yielding five will bring 45s.; or, in other words, in the former case, so far from having made money after his year's toil and hardship, the unfortunate tiller finds himself at a loss of 7s. an acre, whereas in the latter he becomes the happy possessor of 2s. gain on each acre, with which he has to pay the bank's bills, the shopkeeper's debts, rates and taxes, and the many little expenses incidental to everyday life.

What wonder, then, if at Cloyne and at Midleton, and at many another centre, "the farmers are in a state of mind bordering upon craze!" For the price of barley is not nine shillings a barrel, but seven, and unsaleable even at that. And then, when in his despair the wretched peasant demands a reduction of 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. on his rent, he is denounced as if he were a pirate, and the whole resources of civilization at the disposal of the Government are placed at the disposal of the landlord if he chooses to fling the worn-out rent-making machine into the wayside and level his homestead to the ground. The more I think of it the more I marvel at the patience and laborious honesty of the hard-hit Irish tenant.

#### THE DIVISION OF LOSS.

If the loss entailed by the fall of 20 per cent. in Irish agricultural values is to be equally shared between landlord and tenant, and if the whole of the crop is sold at market prices, it necessitates a reduction of the existing rents of from 20 to 100 per cent., according to the proportion which rent bears to the gross produce. As on small farms the proportion sold is seldom more than half the crop, the reduction would vary from 10 to 50 per cent. I do not assert that the loss ought to be equally divided. If that principle were strictly enforced the rack-

renting landlord would suffer the least reduction. For instance, Landlord A takes from a tenant as rent one-half the produce of his farm—namely, £50. Landlord B only exacts one quarter of the produce of an exactly similar farm—namely, £25. The fall of 20 per cent. in prices in the proportion sold—say, 50 per cent. of the whole—costs each of the tenants the same sum—namely, £10. If that loss is equally divided between landlord and tenant, Landlord A and Landlord B would each lose £5; this would be only 10 per cent. reduction of the receipts of rack-renting Landlord A, while it would reduce low-renting Landlord B's rent by 20 per cent. This is obviously unjust, but the same injustice is done whenever any all-round abatement is enforced. In defence of the equal division of the loss on the portion of the crop that is turned into money—for it is only on that fraction of the gross produce that the effect of the fall in prices should be calculated—it may be contended, first, that no judicial rents can be regarded as rack rents at the prices ruling when they were fixed, and (2) that the tenant sitting at a low rent, who is overtaken by a sudden disaster, finds it just as difficult to meet his engagements as the man who is sitting at a high rent. The standard of living is adjusted to the sum available for expenditure, and it is by no means always the smartest-rented man who has the least spare cash.

#### THE LAND COURT AND THE DEPRESSION.

It will not be contended seriously by any that this heavy unprecedented and all-round depression in agricultural values was foreseen and allowed for by the Land Commissioners. During my investigations I never lost any opportunity that was afforded me of inquiring from Sub-Commissioners and ex-Sub-Commissioners, valuers, and all other persons engaged in the administration of the Land Act, whether, as a matter of fact, when they went about the country fixing rent, they had fixed it at a figure low enough to enable the farmer to live and thrive under the present prices. With one consent they all repudiated any such supposition. Said one of the ablest members of the Land Court, when I questioned him upon the subject :

" You ask me if I foresaw the present state of things? Certainly not. Neither did any of my colleagues. How could we? We are not prophets. And even if we had had the gift of prophecy, would we have been permitted to adjust rents according to our prophetic visions? To ask the question is to answer it."

" But what did you expect would be the future of prices when you fixed rent for fifteen years?"

" I expected prices would be lower than they were in the past, but not much lower. I never expected to see them go down below the prices of 1878-9, nor did I expect them to rise to the level of the high prices of 1872-3. Prices, I thought, would remain tolerably steady. American competition, I expected, would keep prices from mounting very high, but none of us dreamed that it would ever cut the prices down to the figure now prevailing."

" Then your fair rents of 1881-2-3-4?"

" Are unfair rents to-day. There is no doubt of it. I am the first to admit it. If you look at the reductions which we are making now you will see what a different estimate we make of the rental value of land now and that which prevailed in the first years of the Land Act."

#### RECENTLY FIXED JUDICIAL RENTS.

Of that, indeed, there can be no doubt. A reference to the recent decisions of the Land Court shows that the

average reductions made in the first months of this year have run as follows :—

January 22.1	March 29.5	May 27.6
February 27.7	April 29.3	June 29.2

Forty and 50 per cent. reductions are by no means rare. The Roscommon Sub-Commission pronounced several decisions at Ballinasloe just before I left Ireland. On these it will be seen there has been made a reduction of 40 per cent., and what makes it more remarkable is that in almost every case the rent is reduced far below Griffith's valuation.

Omitting single cases, where there may have been exceptional circumstances, here are a few of the landlords who had their rents reduced in October by the Commission for the county Roscommon :—

Landlord.	No. of Cases.	Old Rent.	Judicial Rent.	Reduction.
James S. Walpole	4	£ 50 2 0	£ 31 5 0	18 17 0
Cath. Durnan.....	3	46 19 2	25 15 0	21 4 2
Major Malley .....	5	27 0 9	18 14 0	8 6 9
John Reilly .....	2	48 5 0	23 10 0	24 15 0
R. J. Lloyd .....	2	19 6 0	13 4 0	6 2 0
Digby West .....	3	35 10 0	20 15 0	14 15 0
Francis Roberts .....	5	63 10 0	29 6 0	34 4 0
J. Reddington .....	3	32 9 0	20 0 0	12 9 0
Major-Gen. Sankey	3	44 3 0	34 7 0	9 16 0
Mrs. Begg .....	12	163 10 0	90 4 0	73 6 0
Mr. Kyle .....	3	30 16 0	19 15 0	11 1 0
R. R. Wade.....	5	31 3 0	20 13 0	10 10 0
		592 13 11	347 8 0	245 5 11

There is no doubt at all that if all the judicial rents were to be fixed anew the reductions would be much greater than those made in the first four years after its passing. The margin on which alone the farmer can live and thrive has been narrowed down so terribly by the fall in prices that the Commissioners have been and are being compelled to apply the pruning-knife with no sparing hand to the landlord's rents.

#### THE EFFECT OF AMERICAN COMPETITION.

I am aware that it is urged by those who have a solid interest in maintaining high rents that the Commissioners must have anticipated that American competition would bring prices down with a run, and that they did in fact take into consideration the depression now upon us in fixing rents at the figure at which they now stand. So easy is it to be wise after the event that it seems impossible to believe that this effect was not foreseen.

But apart from the unanimous testimony of all Assistant Commissioners that they did not foresee it and could not have foreseen it, and that they dared not have cut rents low enough, even if they had had prophetic foresight denied to other mortals, is there sufficient evidence even now that the present depreciation in prices is due to American competition? One of the Sub-Commissioners declared to me that in his judgment the real cause was not the influx of American beef and flour, but the appreciation of gold. Mr. Villiers Stuart, of Dromana, in the interesting and suggestive pamphlet that he addressed to Mr. Gladstone on the subject of farm prices, stoutly contends that the present low prices are by no means to be ascribed to American competition. Prices have fallen although American imports have diminished.

In 1880 one of the ablest and most experienced valuers of the Land Court, Mr. C. G. Grey, was asked by the Royal Commission on Agriculture about this very subject. He replied that in 1876 he had expected the importation

of foreign cattle would lower the price of beef, but that as prices had not fallen he declined to prophesy any more.

"There has been a great increase in the American imports into this country during the last three years," said one of his questioners, "and it is likely to increase. What will be the result?" Mr. Grey replied: "You ask me to prophesy, and I do not like to do so. I cannot tell what would be the result. This increase of imports has not brought down the prices yet, and therefore I cannot say that they will bring down the prices hereafter." Further than that, he refused to be drawn.

One of the Sub-Commissioners, who discussed this point with me at length, said that he remembered distinctly debating the question with himself as to the extent to which he should allow the contingency of increased competition from America to affect the rents he was fixing. He decided finally to ignore it. "We had been scared once before," he said; "when the first American cargoes were landed, every one said that prices would come down with a run. A great scare set in, but after a time the panic abated, prices were not seriously affected, and therefore we were somewhat sceptical as to the reality of the American menace. One thing is certain, that if any Sub-Commission had adjusted rents in 1881 at the figure at which they ought to have been adjusted to meet present prices, and had based their decision on an explicit declaration that they expected American competition to run beef down to 6d. a lb., every decision would have been appealed against and probably reversed on appeal amid any amount of public condemnation. No court can afford to be much wiser and more far-seeing than the general public, and it would have been impossible for any Commissioner to have based his decisions on his own belief that worse times were coming than either landlord or tenant anticipated."

"How, then, did you calculate what rent should be fixed for fifteen years ahead?"

"By assuming that what had been would be. The only guide which we had to the probabilities of the future was our experience in the past, and we calculated that on the whole, taking one year with another, the farmer would get about the same profit out of the land as he did in the last fifteen years. We allowed for a slight fall in prices, but not much, certainly nothing approaching the fall that has actually taken place." Professor Baldwin expressly declares that an Assistant-Commissioner "must not dive into the future," and hence he admits without scruple that "a rent fixed by a competent authority in 1881 or 1882 is not a fair rent in the acute stage of depression through which we are passing."

#### THE NEXT QUESTION.

I have now answered, I hope fairly, and with such rough approximation to accuracy as is possible under the circumstances, the first two questions which I was sent to Ireland to report upon. No reasonable man can, I think, deny, in face of the figures which I have quoted, that there has been this year a fall of 20 per cent. in prices of Irish agricultural produce, justifying, on the face of it, a demand for a reduction of judicial rents—and therefore *a fortiori* of all rents higher than those fixed by the Land Commission—by an amount varying almost indefinitely from 10 to 100 per cent. For the abatement varies—if the loss is to be equally shared between landlord and tenant—first, with the proportion of rent to the farm's produce; and secondly, with the proportion of produce sold as compared with that consumed by the tenant and his family.

This fall in prices was not foreseen by the Land Commissioners who fixed the judicial rents, and therefore,

according to the phrase of an Assistant-Commissioner, "the fair rents of 1881-2-3-4 are unfair rents to-day."

There now remains the third branch of my inquiry—namely, whether the need for a reduction in rent is being recognized by the good landlords, and to what extent this recognition goes, both as to the abatements given and the number of the landlords who are making them.

#### WHAT ARE THE LANDLORDS DOING?

When I first broached this subject in official quarters I was told that it would be impossible to ascertain what reductions landlords were giving. To begin with, there are about 6,000 of them, with all kinds of estates, and every conceivable variety of relations with their tenants. There were millionaires and there were bankrupts. There were estates where the landlord was resident, wealthy, and liberal; there were others where he was absentee, and mortgaged up to the eyes. It was impossible, I was told, for the Executive Government *in esse* which occupies the Castle to procure me any returns as to what abatements had been made to tenants. The Government had no statistics; the landlords would make no returns. If they were asked to do so they would refuse, believing that the information was sought in order to prepare the way for a fresh attack upon their rents. A few of the larger and more liberal landlords might state what they had given—the majority of landlords would not answer a question. All hope of getting to know what had been done in the way of reduction from the Castle was at an end. There exists, however, the I.L.P.U., a voluntary association called the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, which is popularly supposed to be an organization created to defend the interests of landlords, and which publishes a weekly gazette, the object of which seems to be to prove that, after seven centuries of loyal and patriotic treatment, the majority of the Irish are thieves and liars, with a weakness for assassination, and to argue that, therefore, a similar treatment should be continued for all time. This association had issued on the 25th of September the following circular from its Intelligence Department, 109, Grafton-street, Dublin:

While the hope is very generally and confidently expressed at the present time that the landowners of Ireland will, during the coming winter, act with moderation with regard to evictions, the fact is realized that illegal combination and the action of the National League may tend to precipitate a condition of affairs under which it will be found necessary for them to invoke the aid of public authority.

It will be a matter for very great regret if such a condition of things should be brought about, particularly in view of the fact that the truth about such proceedings will be distorted by the "Nationalist" press in every possible way. No matter what the justification be for having recourse to the law, the circumstances will be put forward in a false light, and represented as indicative of the length to which landlord oppression and tyranny can go.

With the dealings between individual landlords and tenants in Ireland the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union has nothing to do, but inasmuch as one of the principal objects of the association is the supplying of accurate information on Irish affairs to the British press and public, the committee are anxious to arrange for the facts connected with each future proceeding being placed at their disposal.

I am, therefore, to suggest that should no other course be open to you but to move in the direction of eviction, it will be of great public advantage if you will, at the very earliest moment possible, communicate with these officers, supplying full details regarding the reason for such action, and particulars with respect to the circumstances under which it is taken. By this means it may be possible to overcome some of the effects

which will undoubtedly follow from the circulation of any incorrect version of the matter.

As "the supplying of accurate information on Irish affairs to the British press" was one of the principal objects of the I.L.P.U., I wrote to the secretary immediately on my arrival in Dublin, and asked for the favour of an interview, in the hope that I might be supplied by the Landlords' Union with accurate information on the subject dealt with in their circular, and on the general question of the fall of prices and the reduction of rent. Unfortunately, however, I was not deemed worthy to receive information from that source. A short note from the secretary, informing me that he had no information to impart beyond that contained in the printed papers of the I.L.P.U., and that he was leaving for England next day, deprived me of the opportunity of securing the necessary information through his agency. After he returned from England I renewed through a friend the attempt to possess myself of the information collected by the Union, but the effort failed. Every one else in all Ireland, official or unofficial, Catholic or Protestant, landlord or tenant, priest or laymen, to whom I applied for help in prosecuting my inquiries, gave me every assistance in their power. The one exception was the association "one of whose principal objects was supplying accurate information to the British press."

#### THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

The Government *in esse* at the Castle being unable to help me, and the Landlords' Union being unwilling, I turned to the Government *in posse*, which is temporarily located in O'Connell-street. I asked them for the information that I wanted. They had not got it, but they offered to collect it for me without loss of time. I drew up a statement of the particulars which I needed. It was submitted to the executive committee by Mr. Harrington, and in substance approved. A circular was at once issued to all the local branches of the National League asking them to fill in and return as speedily as possible a return giving the information required. Several of the particulars for which I had asked were omitted in order to avoid delay. The circulars were sent out the Saturday after I arrived in Dublin. On the Monday several of them, duly filled in, were returned to O'Connell-street, and the others followed with the most gratifying promptitude.

The question which I was most anxious to have answered was what reductions were being given on judicial rents, but it will be seen this was by no means the only information sought for. I have not got a copy of the text of the circular which was issued by the central executive to the secretaries of the local branches. The circular suggested that in every case, where it was feasible, the replies should be drawn up with the assistance of the parish priest. The circular was read out to the members of each branch at their usual Sunday meeting, information was collected, the return filled up, signed by the secretary, and returned to the head office. 773 of these returns are now lying before me, and although they only cover about one-third of the parishes of Ireland, they afford a most interesting insight into the existing situation of rural Ireland. It is impossible to reprint them in full. I can only tabulate the totals and give a few specimens of the returns. I was perfectly free to submit the returns from any or every branch to the landlords whom I might meet whose property lay in that district, and although I did not avail myself largely of that privilege I found the returns fairly accurate in those cases where I submitted them to the other side. There is no reason to regard the returns with suspicion. It was difficult for the

secretary of a local branch to know whether it was good policy to exaggerate or to understate the reductions given by the landlords in his district. The cue might be to hold up the landlords to public odium because they were making no reduction, or it might be to collect as many cases of voluntary reduction as possible, in order to strengthen the case for enforcing a general reduction. These tendencies being mutually destructive, the secretaries would probably fill in the return as accurately as they could.

#### A CENSUS OF LANDLORDS AND THEIR REDUCTIONS.

The circular asking the returns to be filled gave no hint or leading. It was a simple request for information to be filled in accurately and sent in expeditiously. Of course I cannot vouch for the statements contained in the replies to the circulars, which I print as received. The following is a specimen of the way in which the returns were filled up :—

#### COUNTY GALWAY.

##### WOODFORD BRANCH.

*How many landlords hold property in the district comprised by branch?*—Seven.

*How many residents?*—Six.

*Absentees?*—One (Clanricarde).

*What proportion of rent due last gale day has been paid?*—None. Rent not usually called for till November.

*How many made reductions last gale day? Give names and amount of reductions.*—Five. Sir Henry Burke, Bart.; Edward R. Matthews, J.P.; and Lord Westmeath and J. K. Burke, J.P., gave three shillings in the pound on November half gale. Matthews gave it on all the rent and arrears then due, but his property and J. K. Burke's are very small. Neither Clanricarde nor Mrs. Lewis gave any reduction whatever, and it is only on those two properties that evictions have taken place.

*Were reductions made on judicial rents? Give name of landlord and amount.*—Judicial rents were reduced by Matthews by giving three shillings in the pound. None of Sir H. Burke's tenants in this parish went into the Land Courts. There were some judicial rents fixed on the Lewis and Clanricarde properties, but they gave no reduction at all.

*How many evicted families in district comprised by branch?*—Six, besides three others who were readmitted as caretakers.

PATRICK KEARY, Secretary.

#### COUNTY LOUTH.

##### LOUTH BRANCH.

*How many landlords?*—Thirteen.

*How many resident?*—Eleven.

*Absentees?*—Two.

*What proportion of rent?*—About 20 per cent.

*How many made reductions last gale day?*

Colonel Clive to tenants who settled outside of court, 10 per cent., but gave none to those who settled in the court. Is an absentee.

Colonel Fortescue, 10 per cent. Is a resident.

— Arthur Hamil, 20 per cent., leaseholders; small estates. Three evicted farms, which are waste. One emergency man.

Charles Filgate gave a reduction of 15 per cent., but got no rent at May, which was last gale day. Were not judicial rents.

*Were reductions made on judicial rents?*

Colonel Fortescue, 10 per cent. who signed judicial leases.

Trustees for Lord Louth, 20 per cent.

Captain Plunket, 20 per cent.

— Forster, Ballymascanlon, 10 per cent.

— Marley, Belvedere, Mullingar, 15 per cent.

*How many evicted families in district?*—Four. Three by A. Hamil in Tully, waste; one by Colonel Clive, in possession of a grabber.

JOHN BYRNE, Secretary,  
And filled with Rev. Peter McArtney's, C.C., instruc-  
tion.

#### COUNTY KERRY.

##### SCARTAGLEN BRANCH.

*How many landlords hold property in the district comprised by branch?*—Thirteen.

*How many resident?*—Ten.

*Absentees?*—Three.

*What proportion of rent due last gale day has been paid?*—None, so far as can be ascertained.

*How many made reductions last gale day? Give names and amount of reductions:*

H. A. Herbert, Muckross, absentee, 15 per cent.  
None in official.

Morgan J. O'Connell, 25 per cent.

Mrs. Browne, 20 per cent.

Stokes, Tralee.

Huggard, Tralee. No reductions pending purchase, offered at 23, would get 16 Griffith's.

Burstead, Dublin, 25 per cent.

Hurly, Tralee, ejectment decrees against five out of six tenants.

M. Gill, Killarney, 30 per cent. Five tenants evicted; rent 1½ value still.

Creagh, Mallow, 25 per cent. Under the court rent 1½ value with centage.

Golway, 20 per cent.

*Were reductions made on judicial rents? Give name of landlord and amount:*

Jerome Roche, Sol., Castleisland, offered 20 per cent. on judicial by paying all rents due which the tenants were not able to pay.

Goff, London, 20 per cent. on judicial.

Fitzgerald, Canada, 15 per cent. on judicial. The above reductions are on the rents payable last March. There is none of last September rents paid yet.

*How many evicted families in district comprised by branch?*—Twelve at present, and twice as many expecting sheriff daily.

M. J. O'LEARY, P.L.G., Secretary.

These returns when they came in were arranged in their counties and cast out on sheets, so that the returns for the whole county could be seen at a glance.

#### COUNTY KERRY.

BRANCH.	Landlords.			Proportion of Rent due paid last Gale.	Reductions of Judicial Rents.		Families evicted
	Resident.	Absent.	Total.		No.	Amounts.	
Abbey {	7	—	7	—	4	{ 25; 15 to 25; 20 and 10 }	23
Adnay {	5	2	7	Scarcely any	—	{ 10 p.c. offered but not largely accepted. }	6
Ardfert & Killmoy- ley .... {	6	10	16	{ Two Tenants paid }	2	Each 20 p.c.	10
Ballycro- hotine .... {	14	4	18	None	1	20; 15 (refused).	21
Bally Duff. {	2	4	6	3 gales or unpaid	4	30; 20; 20; 10	8
Bally Long Ford .... {	3	4	7	Scarcely any	2	20 and 15	23
Ballybunion Enmett .... {	—	6	6	None	—	—	10
Bonadur ... {	2	6	8	—	—	—	None
Bondal .... {	—	1	1	—	—	Non	None

## COUNTY KERRY—Continued.

BRANCH.	Landlords.			Proportion of Rent due paid last Gale.	Reductions of Judicial Rents.		Families evicted.
	Resident	Absent	Total		No.	Amounts.	
Brosna*	2	4	6	—	—	—	—
Capirdaniel	1	3	4	20 p.c.	1	50 p.c.	1
Castlemaine	4	2	5	—	1	10 p.c.	7
Causeway	4	3	7	None	2	20; 15 p.c.	3
Duagh	12	8	20	5 p.c.	2	15 to 25; 10	54
Fries	—	6	6	—	—	None.	14
Glenbeight	—	5	5	None [£25]	—	None [nominally]	—
Glenflesk	1	10	11	None	4	25; 25; 20; 15	2
Gneveguilla	2	1	3	None	—	None	1
Irvemore	1	11	12	None	2	25; 25	4
Kenmare	5	6	11	1-4th	—	—	10
Kielaryrander	—	5	5	None	—	Promise made	12
Killorglin	18	4	22	35 p.c.	3	Each 15 p.c.	11
Knockanure	3	1	4	½	1	20 p.c.	4
Lixnaw	—	15	15	None	—	—	6
Lispole	2	5	7	"Can't know."	2	20; 10	None
Listry	1	9	10	1-5th	—	None	6
Milltown	4	3	7	About 1-3rd	3	10; 30; 15	17
Newtownsander	1	8	9	Scarcely any	4	20; 15; 15; 20	3
Rathmore	1	2	3	2-3rds	2	15 to 25; 15 to 20	13
Saumt	1	5	6	50 p.c.	—	25 p.c.	30
Scartaglen	10	3	13	None	3	20; 20; 15	12
Tuosist	—	1	1	More than ½	—	None	2
Valentia	—	2	2	Knight of Kerry; none to Trinity College.	—	None	None
—	5	—	5	—	1	15 p.c.	2
—	5	2	7	—	4	15; 20; 30; 25	14
	122	160	282		48	19 per cent.	319

\* Permanent Reduction in 1881 of 33 p.c.; 17 p.c. September, 1885.

† All evicted families have returned, and are working farms: only one really out.

‡ But receipts for rent are "on account."

There is considerable difficulty in estimating the value of some of these entries. It was an oversight in issuing the circular not to ask them to specify the date of the last gale day. In some cases the gale day referred to was that of September 21, immediately before the return was made out. In others the reference is to the May gale. Then, again, about the absentees. Some branches return as absentees landlords who reside in the next county, and others make no account of occasional residence. The secretary of the Dunmore and Ballynahinch branch in county Down filled us his query about landlords as follows:—

Colonel Forde is the resident landlord, but all are partly so, inasmuch as they all reside partly in County Down.

2. All are partly absentees, as the actual resident, Colonel Forde, goes frequently to England and the Continent of Europe, but still keeps a large farm and a grand establishment at Seaford. The other large owner, Captain Kerr, has had until very recently a splendid establishment and one home farm at Ballynahinch; but the fine establishment is now in the hands of a caretaker and a gamekeeper, and the home farm is let in conacre and grazing to the people about Ballynahinch. Captain Kerr is also master of the County Down Staghound Club, who have their kennel at Ballynahinch. He is also M.P. for East Down, but the Constitutionalists pay his election expenses. The other small owners live in the neighbourhood, but not on their properties in this branch. And so forth, an interesting explanation indeed.

The returns of evicted families seem to include only those still resident in the district. In cases where the

families have emigrated it is mentioned; but it is not always stated whether or not they have been reinstated as caretakers. In some instances it is mentioned, in others those who are reinstated are not included among the evicted. In some cases also the return includes labourers in towns who have been evicted. But after making every deduction, the total of 3,057 evicted families in one-third of Ireland is somewhat portentous. Yet there were all these evicted families in one-third of Ireland in October, 1886—a fact which cannot be lost sight of in taking into account the agrarian future. The following table has been compiled giving the net result of what the landlords have done in the way of voluntarily cutting the judicial rents to meet the pressure of the times:—

## RETURN OF ABATEMENTS ON JUDICIAL RENTS.

County.	No. of League Branch.	Landlords.			Evicted Tenants.	Reductions.
		Res.	Absent.	Total.		
Ulster :						
Antrim	10	47	32	79	20	3 8½
Armagh	7	86	41	127	48	6 14
Cavan	27	239	156	395	172	34 14½
Donegal	34	105	167	272	292	10 18½
Down	20	89	115	204	33	4 15
Fermanagh	17	92	48	140	80	5 14
Londonderry	10	45	46	91	22	5 11
Monaghan	18	137	131	268	131	12 13
Tyrone	24	115	126	241	99	18 13
Leinster :	167	955	862	1,817	897	97 14
Carlow	5	63	18	81	4	3 25
Dublin	5	29	53	82	6	—
Kildare	16	89	83	172	20	5 20½
Kilkenny	20	181	131	312	39	29 17
King's	14	79	95	174	20	13 17
Longford	18	57	135	192	77	25 15
Louth	17	104	77	181	7	25 15
Meath	27	148	180	328	47	9 19
Queen's	15	66	95	161	26	7 16
Westmeath	16	91	120	211	26	12 14½
Wexford	34	278	206	484	89	25 15
Wicklow	11	73	58	131	31	3 37½
Connaught :	198	1,258	1,251	2,509	392	156 16½
Galway	54	207	273	480	248	71 16
Leitrim	18	130	104	234	179	18 14
Mayo	35	109	204	313	284	14 21¾
Roscommon	31	142	160	302	129	46 17
Sligo	26	150	111	261	53	26 17
Munster :	164	738	852	1,590	893	175 17
Clare	41	188	279	467	87	46 18
Cork	65	770	418	1,188	187	128 17
Kerry	35	122	160	282	319	48 19
Limerick	56	299	282	581	123	101 17½
Tipperary	45	280	249	529	124	90 17½
Waterford	13	85	51	136	35	12 17
	255	1,744	1,439	3,183	875	425 17½
TOTAL.						
The following is the total of all the returns received:—						
Ulster	167	955	862	1,817	897	97 14
Leinster	198	1,258	1,251	2,509	392	156 16½
Connaught	164	738	852	1,590	893	175 17
Munster	255	1,744	1,439	3,183	875	425 17½
	784	4,695	4,404	9,099	3,057	853 17

The returns do not cover all Ireland, but it may be noted that every county is represented, and the districts making returns may be accepted as fairly representative of the rest of the country. Landlords whose estates lie in many parishes are included in more than one return, a fact which must not be forgotten in estimating the number both of residents and absentees, as well as the number of those who have made reductions on judicial rents. The only value of these figures, therefore, is not positive, but comparative. The net result of the census is to show that the proportion of landlords who made abatements on their judicial rents before October this year is as follows :—

Landlords.	Average Reduction on Judicial Rents.	
Ulster .....	5 per cent.	14
Leinster .....	6     ",	16½
Connaught .....	12    ",	17
Munster .....	14    ",	17½

No return is made of the number of tenants who have reaped the benefit of these reductions, but as a rule the tenants seem to have insisted on sharing even all round.

#### REDUCTIONS ON NON-JUDICIAL RENTS.

The net results of the census of reduction on judicial rents, compiled from the returns of the local branches of the National League, contrast somewhat oddly with the reductions in non-judicial rents. The result in the counties selected for comparison is rather surprising, the reductions being by no means so much heavier in non-judicial rents than on judicial as might have been expected. The following returns for a typical county in each province brings this out very clearly :—

Landlords.	Reductions Reported.				Percentage of reducing Landlords.	
	Non-judicial.		Judicial.		Non-ju.	Judicial
	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.		
Ulster— Cavan .....	395	83	19	39	14½	21
Leinster— Westmeath .	211	14	17	12	14½	6½
Munster— Clare .....	467	123	19½	49	18	26
Connacht— Roscommon	234	61	16	18	14	28½
	<b>1307</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>18½</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>15½</b>	<b>20½</b>
					<b>8½</b>	

About one-fifth of the holders of old rents gave reductions in the districts included in these returns, as against only 8½ per cent. of the holders of judicial rents. The proportion of reduction also was slightly higher, but the difference is so slight as to confirm the belief that in most cases the non-judicial rents are at present very near the level of the judicial rents fixed in the first four years of the Land Act.

#### IRISH EDITORS ON RENT REDUCTION.

The last remaining source of information was the files of the Irish country papers. I asked my journalistic brethren in Ireland to inform me (1) what abatements in rent had been recorded in their district this year? (2) What reduction the tenants are likely to demand? and (3) what they anticipated would be the probable course of events this winter?

The following are extracts from the replies which I received :—

#### ULSTER.

*Armagh Guardian*.—1. The average reduction made in the Land Court is from 15 to 17½. Several landlords

have allowed 15 to 25 per cent. outside the Land Court. No doubt the vast majority of the landlords would be fully satisfied at present if they could get 50 per cent. of the rent due up to last May. 2. The small Protestant or Loyalist farmers will pay their rents, but will look for a reduction. Another class, "the pay no rent men," will look for 50 per cent. abatement, while others of them will try to get off paying any rent. 3. There is no danger of agrarian crime between landlord and tenant in Ulster, and the farmers in other portions of Ireland appear to be getting tired of the agitation ; so that we look forward to a peaceful winter generally.

*Ballymoney Free Press*.—1. No general abatements are being given. In a few exceptional cases abatements are likely to be made on leases taken out about 1870, but they will be few and far between. 2. It is not probable that the tenants will demand a reduction, but their opinion is that they would be entitled to 30 per cent. reduction. 3. Tenants will probably ask for time to pay their rents, and in some cases the request will be granted. Where arrears are due it may be refused. One estate agent has already issued processes for one and a half year's rent due.

*Ballymena Advertiser*.—1. I am not aware of any abatement. 2. I am not aware that they are likely to demand any reduction. 3. I think it likely that the people will not depart from their usual practice—that is, work hard, keep sober, and behave themselves. They are perfectly contented to earn their bread instead of beg it, and they don't live in these parts by preaching sedition or by stealing firearms from their neighbours.

*Coleraine Chronicle*.—1. No abatements have been recorded. 2. Tenants generally believe that there should be a reduction of from 25 to 30 per cent. 3. Weak tenants will get farther behind in arrears, and the better class of tenants will become more and more dissatisfied with the unremunerative nature of agriculture.

*Cavan Weekly News*.—1. The majority of the landlords gave 15 to 25 per cent. of an abatement last year ; the collection for this year has not begun yet. For so far there is no mention of any abatement, but I believe it would be given. 2. I think the tenants will expect 20 or 25 per cent. of a reduction. 3. I believe the winter will pass over quietly in this county.

*Donegal Independent*.—1. Cannot report this till November when rent is being paid. 2. 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. 3. Agitation threatened, but impossible to say. Owing to want of work there will be great distress among labouring classes. Farmers will also suffer.

#### CONNAUGHT.

*Tuam Herald*.—1. Abatements in rent are general (no exceptions) in this district. The farms are fairly let, and the people are in comfortable circumstances. It is one of the best districts in Ireland, and evictions are rare. Farmers have in some instances large sums to their credit in bank, in fact the exception is the man who has not money. The abatements made varied from 20 to 35 per cent. Average about 20 per cent. 2. Notwithstanding that farmers have money, they are not willing to pay rents. They shall follow the instructions issued to them by the local branches of the National League—it would not be safe for them to do otherwise. 3. In my opinion the winter approaching will be one of the worst Ireland has seen ; murders, outrages of all kinds will be abundant ; rents will not be paid ; and the Executive will have a most difficult task to govern us and to protect life and property. The outlook is one of the most gloomy.

*Roscommon Messenger*.—1. No reductions of any consequence have been yet given. The greater portion of

the rents is collected in November and December. Reductions will be given in some cases, but in others the landlords will endeavour to extract the full amount. 2. From 20 to 50 per cent. 3. Rents will be fairly paid if reasonable reductions are given. If landlords insist on the full rents, it will in many cases be impossible to meet them.

*Mayo Examiner.*—1. We have pressed for abatements in the press. Have not heard of a landlord in Mayo making any reduction. There are a few high offers for sale under Lord Ashbourne's Act. They would expect 20 per cent. 3. If eviction is kept going I fear there will be retaliation, and, once begun, it will extend.

*Connaught Telegraph.*—1. I regret I have not a single abatement to record, although they are sorely needed, taking the poverty of the people into account. Landlords relentless in their demand, 30 per cent. of tenants unable to pay. 2. Tenants would take 25 per cent., but I fear will not get it, as landlords want to extract the last penny. 3. I fear if evictions are carried out the result will be disastrous to those engaged in eviction, otherwise country peaceable.

*Ballina Herald.*—1. None as far as I am aware. 2. Not aware of any. No demands as yet. Am informed that rents are being paid. 3. Quiet and uneventful.

*Sligo Independent.*—1. Lord Erne, old rents, 15 per cent. Colonel Cooper, old rents, 10 per cent. Sir H. W. Gore Booth, old rents, 15 per cent.; no reductions on judicial rents. 2. Some will not ask any, and others will be coerced by the National League to demand 50 per cent. 3. If the agitators can do it the county will be in a state of turmoil.

#### MUNSTER.

*Clare Examiner.*—1. Some reductions from 20 to 37½ per cent. are stated to have been conceded by landlords by country correspondents to the local papers. They appear as if voluntary abatements. 2. They expect a large reduction, but in cases where a good understanding prevails between landlord and tenant mutual concessions will be likely to facilitate arrangements. 3. I think, unless in exceptional cases, amicable arrangements with regard to reductions in rent may take place, especially as the necessity for a reduction appears to be admitted by the landlord class in consequence of the low state of prices of all kinds of produce.

*Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator.*—1. Several reductions of 20 per cent. 2. I cannot state what reduction would satisfy them, but complaints are universal as to the fall in prices and the late and inefficient harvest. 3. It is hoped that with concessions on the part of landlords we shall have a tranquil winter. Employment is scarce in towns and in the country; nothing permanent can be effected in the absence of the revival of manufacturing industries.

*Cork Herald.*—1. A considerable number of abatements were recorded early in the year, but those from whom the tenants have most to fear give no abatements. The Landed Estates Court judges, on gale due 29th September last year, gave reductions varying from 15 to 30 per cent. The men who give no abatements allow the arrears to accrue in order that the tenants may be the more at their mercy when the opportune time arrives. This mostly occurs in the case of "scientific" land agents, who reduce their calling to a fine art. Within the next month the great pressure from the landlords will arise; until that time arrives it will be impossible to say to what extent abatements will be granted in this year 1886. 2. From 25 to 40 per cent. 3. All depends on landlords. Many will give satisfactory abatements, many will not, and

will endeavour to force tenants to purchase at impossible rates.

*Cork Examiner.*—1. This is such a wide district, comprising nearly the entire province of Munster, it would not be possible to give the particulars required here, but judging from the proceedings of the Michaelmas quarter sessions, as far as they have gone, the landlords appear to be pretty generally resorting to legal proceedings for their rent, which does not mean conceding abatements. 2. 25 to 35 per cent. 3. A good deal depends on the course of the Government. If a Coercion Bill suppresses the National League there will be no moral influence to stay the outrages, and though they may be checked to some extent in the worst districts, they are more likely to be widely diffused. In these circumstances the spread of secret societies may be looked on as inevitable.

*Kerry Sentinel.*—1. Several reductions of 20 per cent. on the judicial rents. Encumbered landlords offering little or nothing. 2. Twenty to 25 off judicial rents and 35 to 40 off high lease rents (non-judicial) and less of lower. 3. Wholesale evictions or village clearances will not be carried out, but examples made here and there. Disturbance may be fitful, but not general.

#### LEINSTER.

*Dundalk and Newry Examiner.*—1. Almost all landlords in North Louth. 2. Impossible to say until the November gale becomes due. 3. This county (Louth) has always been proverbial for peace, and I do not think it will depart from its traditions under any circumstances.

*Westmeath Independent.*—1. There have been a few cases of voluntary abatement, not more than three giving 15 per cent. or 20 per cent. In most cases, however, where an abatement was given it was not till the bailiffs were at the very door. 2. The general demand seems to be 30 per cent. off existing rents. 3. There is nothing to lead to the belief that there will be disturbance as yet, but it all rests with the action of the landlords; if they act harshly in all likelihood the fire that is smouldering will burst forth. Quietness probably.

*Nationalist and Leinster Times.*—1. Lord Lansdowne, judicial rent, has offered 20 per cent. Will probably be accepted. 2. About 20 per cent. on judicial rents; about 25 to 45 per cent. where rents are not fixed judicially. 3. Appearances at present do not indicate that landlords will offer such reductions as will enable the majority of tenants to pay their rents. In many districts evictions will take place, and the land will be thrown on the landlord's hands, as no tenants will be found to take evicted farms.

*The People (Wexford).*—1. Lord Templemore, judicial terms, Government valuation, 25 per cent. Settled out of court. Several other reductions, 20 per cent. 2. From 25 to 50 per cent. As a matter of fact, in most instances rent cannot be paid out of this year's produce. 3. This entirely depends upon the action of the landlords. The tenants will pay a fair rent—many of them an exorbitant rent—not out of their own, but out of the shopkeepers' pockets. Under existing circumstances, writs, sales of tenants' interest, process ejectments, and evictions are simply inhuman cruelties.

It will be seen that the returns are varied, and that few agree in anything beyond the fact that the prospect of peace this winter depends almost entirely upon the making of reductions in the rent. Reductions are said to be rare in Ulster, except in Cavan, where the majority gave reductions of from 15 to 25 per cent. In Connaught the majority of the landlords in the richer districts seem to have given reductions of from 10 to 35 per cent., but in the poorer districts this seems to have been unusual.

In Munster abatements are much more general. In Leinster the variations are very great, but the reductions seem to be more numerous than in Ulster and the poorer regions of Connaught. They all agree in believing that the tenant will demand from 25 to 40 per cent. on existing rents—an anticipation that seems in a fair way of being realized.

#### REDUCTIONS THIS GALE.

The statistical table compiled from 773 returns filled up by the secretaries of the local branches of the National League, proved very conclusively that in the opinion of many landlords the situation of the tenants last May was such as to render it impossible to pay even their judicial rents without an abatement varying from 10 to 25 per cent. Since then prices have not changed for the better—rather for the worse, with the exception of sheep. The National League returns refer solely to the rents that were paid before October. Since then the only source of information as to the reductions that are being made is the newspaper. The following is a list of the reductions announced in the Irish papers since the circulars were filled in and returned to O'Connell-street :

Landlord.	District.	Reduction Old Rent.	Reduction Judicial Rent.
Adams, Captain W. R.	Jamesbrook	p. c. 15 to 25	p. c. ...
Ahern, Mr.	Kernsbridge	...	15
Allen and Jenkins	Knocktosh	40	...
Atkins Estate	Cork	25	...
Ball, Hon. Julia C.	Ballinacally	10	...
Barker, Ponsonby	Limerick	25	...
Bath, Marquis of	Monaghan	20	...
Bathe, Sir Henry De	Wilksstown	20	...
Beamish, Captain	Whitechurch	25	...
Becher, Sir W. H.	Queenstown	15	...
Belas, G. H.	Roughgrange	20	...
Belturbet Commis-	Belturbet	25	...
sioners.	Ballygaskin	20	...
Bennett, George	Ardcald	20	...
Benson, John	Knockanare	...	25
Blacker, Douglas	Cooley	30	...
Blake, Major	Cloonfad	...	20
Bomford, J. T.	Freemount	47½	...
Boyle, Lady	Querrin	40	...
Brew, Mr.	Marble Hill	15	15
Burke, Sir Henry	Killmer	20	...
Burton Property	Clare	37½	...
Butler, Lord James	Glenroe	20	...
Ditto	Ballylennon	20	...
Byrne, Alderman	Rower	30	...
Carbery, Lord	Knockerra	25	...
Carey, Mrs.	Querren	...	15
Chadwick	{ Castletown Geogh-	15	...
Chambers's Property	egan	...	...
Chapman, W.	Ballinamona	25	...
Chatterton, General	Killorn	20	...
Cheever, Mr.	Limerick	40	...
Chetwood	Ditto	30 & 40	...
Chetwood, K. W.	Keiry, near Listowel	25	...
Chichester, Captain	Killarney	...	25
Chute, Rev. G.	Tintern	25	...
Colclough, F. B.	Kilarney	...	25
Coleturan, D. C.	Louth	20	...
Collins, Mr.	Galway	20	...
Connard, Dr.	Ditto	15	...
Connihan, Dr.	Kilrush	...	15

Landlord.	District.	Reduction Old Rent.	Reduction Judicial Rent.
Coppinger, Mr.	Cork	p. c.	p. c.
Corcoran, D. C., jun.	Colloman Estate	30 to 50	...
Cork, Earl of	Duhallow	25	...
Cox, General	Castlebar	17½	...
Cummins, P.	Clare, Galway	20	...
Davis, R. G.	Fiddane	25	...
De Moylene, Mr.	Kerry	15 to 25	...
Devon, Earl of	Devonshire, Duke of	20	...
Dick, W. W. F.	Lismore	25	...
Dillon, Lord	Dillon Estate	15 to 25	...
Donoughmore, Earl of	Waterford	20 to 30	...
Duncan, Dr.	Ballyfashen	20	20
Dunraven, Lord	Dunraven	25	...
Egmont, Earl of	Limerick	20	...
Emly, Lord	Emly	20	...
Evans Property	Evans Property	15	...
Eyre, J. J.	Limerick	20	...
Farrell, More	Galway	15 to 25	...
Flanagan, Judge	Kilmihil	24	...
Frederick, General	Donegal	20	...
Gould Property	Donegal	33	...
Graham, Francis T.	Letterfrack, Connem.	20 to 25	...
Grant, Colonel	Lowtown	25	...
Hastred, H. D.	Brondford	20	...
Hastred, H. D.	Appleton Hill	20	...
Hall, Mrs.	Hall	10	...
Hamilton, Mr.	Schull	10	...
Hanrahan, Mr.	Analtissa	15	...
Harding, C. P.	Enniskillen	30 to 50	...
Hare, R. D.	Charleville	40	...
Harris Trustees	Clucbron	10	5
Herbert, Henry	Westmeath	20	...
Hyde Property	Cahernane	15	...
Incorporated Society	Fermoy	20 to 25	...
Innes, A. C.	Louth	20	...
James, Mrs.	Newry	20	...
Keane, Marcus	Tullaha	20	...
Kenmare, Lord	Clare	15	...
Kenny, M. and W. R.	Kerry	20	...
Kirwan, Martin	Bawnmore	20	15
Knight of Glin	Kerry	15	...
Lambert, Major T. C.	Waterdale	...	15
Lansdowne, Lord	Kerry	25 to 35	20
Laophin	Kilmalton, Kilkenny	20	...
Lingfield, M.	Middleton	20	...
Lismore, Lord	Limerick	25	...
Littledale, W. T.	Wicklow	50	...
Longfield, Mr.	Castlemary	20	...
Longford, Lord	Longford	15	...
Macktie, Rev. Hugh	Clerban	24 to 30	...
Magill, Colonel	Athlone	25	...
Mahon, J. R.	Galway	15	...
Marley, C. Brimley	Kennegad, &c.	...	15
Marshall Estate	Castleisland	40	...
Martin, Miss	Ballyknock	...	...
Massey, W. H.	Macroom	25	...
Massey, Lord	Limerick	20	...
Massy, Mr.	Tipperary	25 to 30	...
Maunsell, D.	Ashford, Limerick	20	...
McCarthy, Misses	Cregg	30	...
McCabe, C. F.	Ballyhaddock	20	...
McDermott	Corballis	20	...
McMahon, Tim.	Kilmihil	...	20
McGorman	Kilross & Mooresfoot	15 to 25	...
Moor	Kilrush	25	...
Morgan, Captain	Morgan, Mr.	15	...
Morgan, Mr.	Morrough, W.	...	15 to 25
Mulholland, Miss	Kerry	20	...
Ballymateen	Ballymateen	15	...

Landlord.	District.	Reduction Old Rent.	Reduction Judicial Rent.
		p. c.	p. c.
Murphy, C. ....	Glenpistol.....	25	...
Norbury, Lord .....	Furlough .....	15	...
Nugent, Colonel .....	Clonlost .....	10	...
O'Brien, E. ....	Cahermoyle .....	25	...
O'Callaghan, C. G. ....	Ballinahinch.....	20	...
O'Kelly .....	Kilrush .....	30	...
Palliser, W. B. ....	Waterford.....	20	...
Perth, Earl of.....	Glenamaddy.....	20	...
Pim, Rev. J. ....	Killeagh .....	15	...
Plummer, Major .....	Limerick .....	20	...
Poer, De la, Captain..	Waterford.....	25	...
Porter, Mr. ....	Killucan .....	15	...
Protestant Rector .....	Toormore .....	15	...
Purdon, Wellington ..	Killucan .....	25	...
Puxley, H. L. ....	Whitechurch.....	25	...
Reeves, R. W. C. ....	Clare .....	15	...
Reilly, John .....	Milltown .....	25	...
Roland .....	Kerry .....	25	...
Ryan .....	Boulanameal .....	10	...
Saunderson, Colonel..	Cavan .....	15	15
Scott .....	Kilrush .....	20	...
Scully, Vincent .....	Tipperary .....	25	...
Shannon, Earl of .....	Comtmacsherry .....	15	15
Shaw, R. B. ....	Knockbrack .....	15	...
Sheehy, Major .....	Clommore .....	40	...
Sherlock Property....	Waterford.....	20	...
Shirley, Mr. ....	Monaghan .....	20	...
Shute, Rev. S. ....	Irish Grenflesk.....	25	...
Smith, Philip.....	Kevel.....	25	...
Smith, Rev. C. ....	Lavey .....	15	...
Staveley, Captain .....	Drumcollogher.....	25	...
Stewart, Colonel .....	Do. ....	...	...
St. John's Property ..	Athlone.....	20	...
Storey Property.....	Virginia .....	15	...
Stratford Estate .....	Foynes .....	20	...
Sullivan, Dina .....	Cork .....	25	...
Swanson, Rev. Henry	Charleville .....	40	...
Templemore, Lord ...	.....	25	...
Trinity College .....	Rathcoursey .....	15	...
Vandeleur, Colonel ..	Clare .....	20	20
Vaughan, Tim .....	Mullinabone.....	25	15
Ventry, Lord .....	Dingle, Kerry .....	25	25
Villiers, Mr. ....	Kilkenny .....	20	...
Waterford, Marquis of	Waterford.....	25 to 35	...
Weldon, Sir Anthony..	Queen's County .....	20	...
Westby, E. T. ....	Ciare .....	15	...
Wood, G. A. ....	Cork .....	15 to 35	...
Woodley, F. W. ....	Macroom .....	25	...

In most of these cases settlements have been arrived at, and the rent is being paid at the reductions offered. In many the landlord seems to have made the offer spontaneously, in a few it was the result of higgling; but in about one hundred and fifty cases reductions varying from 10 to 50 per cent. have been made already. Every one of these is of course a strong argument in favour of the universal demand of the tenants for a reduction. For no landlord ever reduces his rental by one per cent. unless he is absolutely convinced that it is unjust to demand payment in full. The reductions chronicled are reductions on estates. A single entry on the above list may represent 1,000 tenants.

#### LANDLORDS WHO ARE MAKING REDUCTIONS.

How far the landlords are likely to take this view it is difficult to say. It is possible, however, by the aid of the Domesday Book, to form some idea of the extent to which the larger landlords have recognized the fall in prices as

justifying a reduction of rent. Here is a list of some of the largest landholders in Ireland, excluding R. Berridge, who holds 169,000 acres of mountain, valued at £8,543 per annum, and F. Kennedy, whose 298,000 acres are returned at only £843 per annum; and opposite each is entered the reduction which he is known to have given this year on the ordinary contract rents and on those fixed judicially.

Landlord.	County.	Acres.	Valua-tion.	1886 Reduction.	
				Ord.	Jud.
Abercorn, Duke	Tyrone, &c.....	63,577	35,802	...	...
Antrim, Earl ...	Antrim .....	34,292	20,837	10	...
Ardilaun, Lord...	Galway .....	23,691	4,973	25	...
Ashbrooke, Lord	King's Co .....	19,181	9,460	20	...
Ashtown, Lord...	Kerry .....	36,324	15,343	...	...
Athlumney, Lord	Athlumney, Meath .....	10,213	9,131	...	...
Aylmer, Sir G. ....	Kildare .....	15,396	6,890	...	...
Bandon, Lord ...	Cork .....	40,941	19,215	10	...
Bantry, Lord ...	Cork .....	69,500	14,561	25	20
Bath, Lord .....	Monaghan .....	22,672	19,673	20	...
Becher, Sir H. ....	Kerry .....	18,933	10,528	15	...
Bessborough, Ld.	Carlow .....	34,545	21,006	...	15—20
Booth, Sir R. G. ....	Sligo .....	31,774	16,774	15	...
Bruen, H. ....	Carlow .....	23,409	17,385	...	...
Burke, Sir T. ....	Galway .....	25,258	7,504	15	...
Caledon, Lord ...	Tyrone .....	32,113	19,754	...	...
Carew, Lord .....	Wexford .....	20,881	11,566	15	10
Castlemaine, Ld.	Westmth .....	11,444	7,053	...	...
Castlestuart, Ld.	Tyrone .....	32,615	11,768	...	...
Castletown, Lord	Qun's Co .....	22,241	14,151	15	15
Charlemont, Ld.	Armagh .....	26,598	25,034	...	...
Charleville, Lord	Kg's Co .....	20,032	10,052	...	...
Clancarty, Lord..	Clancarty .....	23,896	11,724	10—20	...
Clanricarde, Lord	Do. ....	52,601	20,836	20	...
Clermont, Lord..	Louth .....	20,369	15,262	25—30	...
Clifden, Lord .....	Kilkenny .....	35,288	20,793	15	10
Clonmell, Lord .....	.....	20,940	13,738	20	...
Colthurst, Sir G. ....	Cork .....	31,260	9,664	...	10
Conyngham, Ld.	Donl., &c. ....	156,973	32,644	20	20
Cooper, Colonel .....	Sligo .....	34,120	11,548	10	...
Coote, Sir C. ....	Queen's .....	47,451	18,007	...	15
Cork, Lord .....	Cork .....	34,885	12,249	20—40	...
Courtown, Earl...	Carlow .....	21,821	11,361	10	...
Darnley, Lord ...	Meath .....	21,858	18,186	1885	...
Dawson, G. K. ....	Tipperary .....	19,093	6,331	...	...
De Freyne, Lord Roscom-	mon .....	.....	.....	10—30	...
De La Poer, E. ....	Waterfrd .....	13,448	4,920	15—25	...
De Vesci, Lord .....	Queen's .....	15,069	9,410	...	...
Devon, Lord.....	Devon .....	33,026	14,525	20	...
Devonshire, Dk.	W a t e r-ford, &c.	60,033	34,266	25	25
Digby, Lord.....	King's .....	29,722	12,745	15	...
Dillon, Lord.....	Mayo .....	83,749	19,231	30	...
Donoughmore, Lord .....	Wexford .....	1,307	1,163	20	...
Downshire, Lord .....	Down .....	110,172	91,522	...	...
Drapers' Co.....	Lond on-derry .....	27,025	14,859	...	...
Drogheda, Marq.	Kil.lare .....	19,297	10,466	15	...
Dunally, Lord ...	Tipperary .....	21,081	7,162	20	...
Dunraven, Lord .....	Limerick .....	15,303	10,937	25	15
I unsandle, Lord .....	Galway .....	37,057	17,393	20	...
Egmont, Lord .....	Cork .....	16,760	13,594	20	...
Ely, Lord .....	Wexford .....	48,902	23,151	10—25	...
Enniskillen, Lord .....	Fermagh .....	29,635	18,795	...	...
Ene, Lord .....	Esmonde. Sir T. ....	40,365	23,804	15	...
Esmonde. Sir T. ....	Wexford .....	3,533	2,780	20—30	20

Landlord.	County.	Acres.	Valua-tion.	1886 Reduction.	
				Ord.	Jud.
Farnham, Lord...	Cavan ...	29,455	£ 20,938	p.c. 10	...
Fermoy, Lord ...	Cork ...	15,543	6,572	25	...
Fitzwilliam, Lord	Wicklow, &c...	91,423	47,699	50	50
Forbes, Lady A.	Wexford	15,216	8,840	...	...
Fox, G. L. ....	Mayo ...	18,850	7,524	...	...
Herbert of Muck- ross.....	Kerry ...	47,238	10,547	15—25	...
Hodgson, Henry	Galway...	17,064	1,121	15	...
Inchiquin, Lord..	Clare ...	20,321	11,681	15—20	15—20
Kenmare, Lord...	Kerry,&c	118,606	31,473	...	...
King-Harman, Cl.	Roscom- mon,&c...	72,913	40,105	...	...
Lansdowne, Lord	Kerry,&c	120,616	31,536	25—35	20
La Touche, J. ...	Kildare..	11,379	7,557	15	...
Leconfield, Lord	Clare ...	43,561	20,519	...	...
Leinster, Duke of	Kildare, &c.....	68,271	47,646	25—30	28
Leitrim, Earl ...	Donegal, &c.....	94,535	19,692	...	...
Lismore, Lord ...	T ippe- rary,&c...	42,206	16,354	25	20—25
Listowel, Lord...	Kerry ...	31,505	16,151	...	15—25
Londonderry, Ld	Down ...	27,416	37,211	...	...
Longford, Lord...	Westmth	19,569	15,485	15—30	...
Lucan, Earl .....	Mayo ...	60,570	12,940	...	...
McConchy, G....	Longford	10,319	3,137	...	20
Massy, W. ....	Cork ...	13,363	3,105	25	...
Monck, Lord.....	Wexford	14,482	7,950	20	...
Monteagle, Lord	Limerick	6,445	5,046	20	...
Naper, J. L. ....	Meath ...	18,863	15,581	...	...
Ormonde, Marq.	T ippe- rary,&c...	27,725	15,611	15	...
Pakenham, Rev.	Antrim..	14,629	15,601	...	...
Palmer, Sir R....	Mayo ...	94,551	20,500	...	12½
Perth, Earl of ...	Galway .	3,439	1,138	...	20
Portsmouth, Lord	Wexford	10,189	9,820	20	...
Powerscourt, Lord	Wexford, &c.....	51,155	15,627	15	15
Rosse, Lord .....	King's ...	25,146	10,461	10	...
Rossmore, Lord .	Carlow...	14,839	13,427	10	...
Saunderson, Col.	Cavan ...	12,362	7,370	15	...
Shirley .....	Monaghn	26,386	20,744	10—20	...
Sligo, Lord .....	Mayo ...	114,881	16,157	...	...
Stewart .....	Donegal	58,818	6,500	15	...
Templemore, Ld.	Wexford	24,073	15,085	...	25
Tighe, Colonel ...	Kilkenny	19,169	11,447	20	20
Tottenham, A. L.	Mayo,&c.	14,561	3,656	15	15
Vandeleur, Col...	Clare ...	19,790	11,216	20	20
Ventry, Lord ...	Kerry ...	93,629	17,067	25	25
Wallace, Sir R....	Antrim..	61,058	74,189	...	...
Waterford, Lord	Waterfd.	65,918	32,325	25—30	...
Westby, Mr. E.P.	Clare ...	25,779	7,691	15	...
White, R. H. E.	Cork ...	16,175	4,227	20	20
Westmeath, Lord	Galway...	14,604	4,377	...	...

It must not be supposed that because some landlords are not returned as having made an abatement they therefore have exacted their rents in full. There may be no local League in their districts, or the local branch may not have sent in a return. The list is valuable, not because it is complete, but because it affords what is admittedly only a fragmentary piece of the evidence in favour of a temporary abatement of Irish rents. Every additional name added to the above list of landlords making reductions is an additional argument in favour of the demand for similar reductions on estates where the rents

are being demanded in full. I am not seeking to bring any indictment against any Irish landlord or section of Irish landlords. The above list is not intended as an impeachment of those against whose names no abatement is entered. It is useful as positive evidence in favour of those whose names arerecorded as having given abatements. It is not available as negative evidence against those who are not mentioned as makers of reductions.

#### WHY DID THE LANDLORDS MAKE THESE REDUCTIONS?

I think I may fairly claim to have answered the third point of my inquiry in a manner that leaves no room for reasonable doubt. The better landlords in Ireland have, as the above tables show, made abatements, and large abatements, not merely in their ordinary rents but upon their judicial rents. Now, why have they made these reductions? They are too general to be explained by any local and exceptional circumstances. They apply, be it observed, not to a tenant here or there, but to all the tenants on the estate, and the estates thus dealt with are scattered all over Ireland. It is obvious on the face of it that a reduction accorded equally by the Marquis of Conyngham in Donegal and the Marquis of Lansdowne in Kerry, the Duke of Devonshire in Waterford, and Lord Fitzwilliam in Wicklow, must be due to conditions which are national, not local, and are general and universal in their character, in other words, the same reasons which led these four noblemen to give from 20 to 25 per cent. abatement of their judicial rents ought equally to lead all the Irish landlords to give at least as much abatement upon their rents this winter. This, I say, might fairly be inferred from the representative character of the estates on which these abatements have been given. Any doubt on the subject, however, is removed by the explicit declarations of some of the landlords who have given abatements to their tenants this November. Lord Ventry, in announcing that he will make a reduction of 25 per cent. upon the judicial rents, explained that the abatement was made commensurate with the fall in agricultural values. In May Lord Ventry gave a reduction of 20 per cent. In November he increased it to 25. This applied equally to both contract and judicial rents, for on his estate, as on that of most of the better class of landlords, the judicial rents are quite as high as the ordinary rents at which the holdings are let. In Lord Ventry's opinion, therefore, the need for a reduction which existed in May has been intensified by the fall in prices, since that date 20 per cent. sufficed six months since; 25 per cent. is the minimum that will suffice to-day.

Lord Ventry's estate, it will be said, lies in the romantic but barren region surrounding Dingle Bay, and it is therefore no fair sample of the rest of Ireland. I will therefore select as my next illustration an estate in the heart of the most fertile region in Ireland—the county Tipperary. Mr. Vincent Scully this autumn has made an abatement of 25 per cent. on the judicial rented farms on his estate; and, what is more to the point, he has explained that he did it because he was satisfied that the fall in prices rendered it necessary to make such a reduction in his rents.

That is fairly conclusive. Here is another case of the same kind, although in a different district. Mr. Francis J. Graham, of Letterfrack, has struck 25 per cent. off the judicial rents of his Connemara tenantry. And why? Because, being "an extensive stockmaster and grazier

himself, both in the county and in the North of Ireland, he can understand the inability of the tenantry to pay even the reduced rents." But the most exhaustive statement of the case in favour of reducing judicial rents has been supplied by Lord Lansdowne, in his letter to his agents announcing that his Kerry rents will be reduced 20 per cent. below the judicial standard, and from 25 to 35 per cent. below the old rents where the rent has not been fixed by the Land Court. Part of this letter refers exclusively to the circumstances of Kerry, and he has expressly stated that there are special reasons why the full reduction should not be accorded to his tenants elsewhere. Nevertheless, the letter contains general considerations which are of universal application; and all of the argument concerning his Kerry estates applies with equal force to all other Kerry estates, and many others outside Kerry, where the conditions are similar. After stating that he has no reason to believe that the judicial rents on his estate are such that upon an average of the yield and prices of agricultural produce his tenants would find it difficult to pay them, Lord Lansdowne proceeds:—

"Upon the other hand, there appear to be considerations which may be urged in favour of the conclusion that upon even the judicial rents properly payable next month some abatement should be made on my Kerry estate. The tenants have had to contend with exceptionally low prices. It is unfortunately the case that the class of stock reared by them does not find favour in the markets, and that when the supply generally becomes excessive the demand for that class is virtually the first to cease and the last to revive. The failure of the Munster Bank has added to the difficulty of the Kerry farmers. I am besides informed that since the beginning of the present year the local merchants, influenced no doubt by the general feeling of insecurity which obtains throughout the country, have ceased to give credit to the farmers. The cessation of credit may prove of ultimate advantage; its sudden withdrawal cannot fail to occasion serious embarrassment.

"Under these circumstances I agree with you that an abatement is called for. I cannot conceive that any system of State fixed rents should exclude altogether the idea that cases may arise where forbearance on the part of the landlord may be called for. If an individual tenant were to sustain an exceptional misfortune, a reasonable landlord would, I apprehend, not refuse that tenant some consideration, merely upon the ground that his rent was a judicial rent. The same argument is, I think, applicable where a body of tenants has, owing to a combination of untoward circumstances, encountered exceptional difficulty.

"The fact that her Majesty's Government has, by its action in appointing a Royal Commission, to some extent reopened the question of rents, makes it the more necessary that the tenant should receive the benefit of any doubt which may exist as to his ability to pay. The strong appeal which has been made to the landlords by the leaders of political opinion on both sides renders it incumbent upon us to spare no effort in order to diminish the difficulties of the coming winter. There are various modes by which those landlords who desire to respond to that appeal can meet the requirements of the case. It appears to me that the simplest is to forgive unconditionally a portion of the judicial as well as of other rents. In a time of depression like that through which we are passing I see no advantage in merely deferring the payment of that proportion."

If we analyze this letter we find that it sets forth the following reasons for a reduction:—

1. Exceptionally low prices.
2. No demand for low-class cattle.
3. Failure of Munster Bank.
4. Cessation of credit by local tradesmen.

These taken together constitute, in the opinion of Lord Lansdowne, such a combination of untoward circumstances as to constitute a condition of exceptional difficulty, in which a reasonable landlord would extend some consideration to his tenants. The best and simplest consideration, he thinks, would be "to forgive unconditionally a portion of the judicial as well as of other rents."

Now, of the four untoward circumstances which in combination justify a reduction of 20 per cent. in judicial rents in Kerry, one is universal, for exceptionally low prices prevail in the Golden Vale, and in Ulster as well as in Kenmare. Of the remaining three the difficulty occasioned by the failure of the Munster Bank not only affects Kerry, it affects all the rest of the province of Munster. The difficulty of selling low-class cattle is experienced equally in Tyrone and in Tipperary. Wherever low-class cattle are bred they are practically unsaleable, and as for the drying up of the credit of local tradesmen, that is by no means confined to Kerry. Three of the reasons adduced in defence of the 20 per cent. drop of the low-rented Lansdowne estates therefore apply, though with somewhat diminished force, to all the estates throughout Ireland.

#### THE ARGUMENT FROM THE ACTION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Strong as is the argument from the example of the better landlords, a still stronger one can be drawn from the pressure which the Government is putting upon the bad landlords to induce them to make abatements in rent. This is one reason why the landlords have never been so reasonable. They feel that they are between the upper and nether millstone. The National League pressing from below and the Government pressing from above work together with the best results. Here is a report from Father Lucy, the parish priest of Clonakilty, in county Cork, which at one time threatened to be one of the cockpits of Ireland this winter. He writes as follows:—

"The advent of the Hon. Captain Plunkett—(Captain Plunkett is the divisional magistrate of Cork, Kerry, and Limerick)—to Clonakilty has practically settled in this district the rent question for this year. During the past week Miss Hungerford, of the Island, has given to her tenants in the townland of Rencen, near Clonakilty, 30 per cent.; Captain Beatam, of Dublin, 25 per cent. to the tenants of South Ring, whose rents were already moderate; Mr. Norwood, J.P., Dunmanway, agent, has given 20 per cent. to the tenants of Cruary, whose rents had already been reduced some 20 and 25 per cent.; Mr. F. J. Beamish, J.P., of Lettercolm, has given 15 per cent. to the tenants in the townland of Gullane, close by Clonakilty, which was all they asked for, as the rents were in a great many instances under Griffith's valuation. Of the twenty-two landlords who hold property in this extensive parish, nineteen have settled amicably with their tenants. The bailiffs are idle, the police, who were worried and harassed by day work and night work, by marching and counter-marching in the discharge of arduous and irksome duties, which they never contemplated when joining the force, are

enjoying a little rest. It is peace all round, *estō perpetua*. I have stated above that nineteen out of the twenty-two have settled amicably with their tenants. The three exceptions are Mrs. Wheeler, Mr. Bennett, and Captain Wheeler. These are the best friends of the Irish National League and the worst enemies of their own class."

As Mr. Wheeler is a practical agriculturist, who is said to have admitted that he knew from his own experience that all kinds of agricultural values have gone down 30 per cent., he is not likely to stand out long against the example of his neighbours and the representations of the Government. But that nineteen out of twenty-two landlords can be induced in this district to make the necessary abatements by one visit of a divisional magistrate shows what influence for good the Government can wield when it pleases to exert itself in opening the eyes of the landlords to their true economic position, and how convinced the Executive Government is that reductions must be made if the tenants are to live.

#### WHAT THE IRISH SAY THEMSELVES.

The representatives of Ireland in Parliament, by 85 to 18, declare that rent must be reduced, and there is not a single representative body in Ireland of any shape or kind that has ventured to assert that existing rents can be paid in full. Not a single public meeting has been held, even of landlords themselves, which has asserted that no reduction is necessary. There are few public bodies in Ireland which have not expressed a more or less emphatic opinion that landlords should make reductions. The Kildare board of guardians is by no means alone among boards of guardians in declaring that it was in the interests of the landlords as well as of the tenants that heavy reductions should be made to meet the fall in prices.

The Irish Bishops assembled at Maynooth on September 8, 1886, unanimously passed the following resolution:—"The Bishops consider they should be wanting in their duty were they to omit declaring the deep anxiety they feel in witnessing the harsh exaction of rents practised on several estates in this season of deep and general depression, and the evictions of tenants, many of whom are now unable to pay the entire amount of their rents. Such a course, if persevered in by landlords, especially if they are sustained therein by the Executive, cannot fail to produce social evils of the gravest character; and the Bishops would humbly and earnestly entreat those who are responsible for public order to adopt temporary measures, while awaiting permanent remedies, in order to prevent the outrages and disorders which they apprehend."

The priests are the best-informed men in the country on the subject, and they are practically unanimous. The priests of the Bailieboro' Deanery, Cavan, presided over by the Most Rev. Dr. Finegan, unanimously passed the following resolutions:—That considering the enormous fall in the price of all agricultural produce, and particularly of that produce which has been always the source from which the small farmers pay their rents, we consider it utterly impossible that they could at present pay the full rent, and that it would be cruel and inhuman on the part of the landlords, which, under the circumstances, is an impossible rent. And that we hereby express our earnest desire that the landlords of the county will manifest a practical sympathy with their tenantry in helping them to tide over the present difficult and critical state of things by an indulgence in time and an adequate abatement.

The Presbyterian Church, on this point, agrees with its Roman rival. The Cork Chamber of Commerce has strongly

urged upon all interested in agriculture to make timely concessions, and even associations of landlords like the Cork Defence Union, which last year protested against any reduction of judicial rents, has not taken that line this year. The only meeting of landlords that has been held in Ireland this autumn met at Cork in October, and it passed a resolution declaring entire agreement with Lord Hartington and Sir M. Hicks-Beach as to the desirability of giving full consideration to the low prices. A resolution to that effect was moved by Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald, and carried unanimously.

It is unnecessary to refer to the resolutions of the National League. That body has done its duty, and constituted itself the mouthpiece of the tenants of the South and West by pressing steadily upon the landlords the necessity for reductions. Great meetings attended by many thousands have been held in all parts of the country, which have passed without a dissentient voice resolutions affirming the need for such reductions. In any other country but Ireland the resolutions of these public meetings would be held to be entitled to the utmost respect and consideration. They are a calm, respectful, temperate representation of the facts. If they are ignored, they will be pressed home with more formidable arguments.

#### WHAT ULSTER WANTS.

The Ulster farmer is not a National Leaguer, but he is crying out almost as sorely as the Southerner. The Antrim Tenant Right Defence Association recently passed a strong resolution demanding a reduction of 50 per cent. on rents. I wrote to Mr. McElroy asking on what so sweeping a demand was based. He replied in a letter which states pretty clearly the Ulster tenant's view of the situation:—"While prepared to prove that there is a considerable fall in the price of agricultural produce and stock, I attach far more importance to this fact: the condition of the farming class is worse than in 1877-78-79, the wet, dark seasons, you remember. I was talking the other day to an American shipping agent, and asked him what class of emigrants are going now in comparison with the class ten years ago. He replied that the present class are superior in all respects, physically, socially, and in an educational sense. The best types of the small farming and labouring classes, especially young men and young women, are leaving the country, and in some districts it is getting difficult to obtain capable servant girls. Faith in farming industry is shaken, and emigration will increase if friends in America give encouragement. The circumstances which compel this movement are not very glaring in figures; they have been accumulating year after year, and time is making them more intense, whether oats are a penny a stone less than last year or not. The whole tendency of agricultural conditions is downward, and the Ulster landlords are looking calmly on like men in dreamland. Of course, the Ulster tenants will pay the rent if they can get the money. What does non-payment by the Ulster tenant mean? The loss of his tenant-right interest, varying from seven to fifteen years' purchase. Few landlords allow more than two years' arrears to accumulate before taking legal proceedings to recover them, and when they get possession they acquire the tenant right. You can understand the efforts therefore that the Ulster tenant will make rather than allow his interest to be endangered. That interest has either been inherited or purchased, and if the Ulster tenants generally pay their rents punctually the payment will not indicate ability so much as determination to preserve, if

possible, their interest intact. Oats are an average crop, turnips above average, hay average, flax ditto ; but potatoes are one-third at least below last year's crop, The way the farmers put the case is this : "No matter how much stuff we may bring to market we are not able to gather money ; we can get the ends to meet, that's all." Many farmers complain that they have not been able to get the ends to meet—that they have been paying rent out of capital.

"All through the fixing of the judicial rents the tenants believed that due allowance was not made for their improvements. Not only were rents fixed too high, taking into consideration the qualities of the soil, but the tenant's vested interest was not adequately recognized, and no notice was taken of general agricultural tendencies. The Commissioners seem to be afraid to make reductions on broad principles of equity and with clear perceptions of the future. Indeed, the Ulster case may be described as threefold. Continuous depression in social circumstances from causes more or less incapable of mathematical demonstration, the fall in prices of produce and stock, and the inadequate decisions of the Land Courts. Realize this triad, then consider the desire of the Ulster tenant to prevent the absorption of his interest by the landlord, and you will have a pretty fair idea of the northern agricultural puzzle."

Meetings of tenantry not under the National League auspices have passed resolutions identical with those of the League. The tenants of the Tottenham and Hall estates in the counties of Fermanagh and Leitrim decided to demand an all-round reduction of  $33\frac{1}{2}$  percent., although some thought 50 percent. too small. Their memorial states that : "Many tenants suffered so much by the floods—the most destructive ever known—that they were totally deprived, not only of the rent, but almost of their means of subsistence—can pay nothing. The potato disease has made a great havoc among the Killea tenants ; from every quarter the cry of inability to pay became common, by reason of the destruction of crops by floods and constant rain, the diseases in cattle fed on the flooded fields, and, over and above this, the depreciation of prices." The tenants of the Glenfin estates demanded a similar reduction, referring principally to the depressed state of the stock market, the failure of the potato crop, and low prices as justifying their demand ; and even if it were granted the most intelligent men present at the meeting expressed the conviction that the tenants would be bearing two parts of the loss.

The *Londonderry Standard*, a staunch Unionist and Presbyterian organ, remarked (November 26) that "the fall of prices had combined with other things to produce greater depression among the agricultural population than we remember to have seen since the famine of 1847, and it remarks with perfect truth that there are great numbers of the Irish people who, however great their hardships, seldom or never complain." The *Freeman's Journal*, Catholic and Home Ruler, confirms the same story. It says :—"As from Lisburn to Lurgan and Armagh and around the eastern side of Lough Neagh, so from Armagh to Monaghan and Omagh, and from Cookstown to Dungannon, and to Lough Neagh's western shores, the same sad story, with slight—very slight—variation indeed, greets the wearied and worried inquirer's ear. Agricultural depression in its every possible phase, without a solitary redeeming feature or a single counter-balancing influence, is the exceptionless rule."

#### SCOTCH FARMERS IN IRELAND.

It is the fashion to accuse Irish farmers of exceptional indifference to the considerations of honesty. It is noto-

rious that down to 1879, when, in a year of severe distress, the landlords, by refusing to make any reduction, forced the Land League into existence, there was no rent-paying animal in the world so much to be depended on as an Irish tenant. Even in 1880 I remember being told by one in the confidence of Mr. Forster that there was as large a percentage paid in Ireland as there was in England or Scotland. The Scotch farmers who have settled in Ireland—those that are left, that is, for most of them have failed and departed—are at least as keen in their demand for abatements as any Irishman alive. One of the most sweeping reductions demanded this fall was pressed by the tenants of Mr. John De la Touche, of Harristown, the chief mover in the matter being a Scotch tenant. The La Touche estate is said to be let at from 20 to 80 per cent. above Griffith's valuation. The Scotch chairman of the La Touche tenantry coolly insists that the rent must come down this year to 20 per cent. under Griffith's ! The memorial which this Scotchman framed is so remarkable as to deserve quoting at length :—

"The memorial of the undersigned tenants respectfully sheweth—That from 1876 to the present time we have had to contend with adverse seasons and disappointing harvests, involving diminished productions of inferior quality, that, accompanied by such serious drawbacks in the matter of our incomes, we had gradually declining prices to cope with, until at the present time wheat that formerly sold at from 2s. to 3s. is worth only from 12s. to 16s. per barrel ; barley that a few years ago sold at from 18s. to 22s. is now bringing only from 10s. to 12s. per barrel, and oats that used to sell at from 10s. to 14s. can only now be turned into cash at from 7s. 6d. to 8s. 6d. per barrel ; while from causes over which we have had no control large quantities of our corn and hay have been so damaged this season as to be unsaleable at any price. That of late years our meat and live stock markets have been also declining gradually, owing to the intensity of foreign competition, until at the present time beef that but a few years ago sold at 7½d. to 8½d. is now selling at from 4½d. to 5½d. per lb. Mutton that not long ago brought us from 8d. to 9d. is now bringing us no more than from 5½d. to 6½d. per lb. Bacon on foot, that readily used to command from 5½d. to 6½d., is now difficult to dispose of at from 4d. to 4½d. per lb. ; whilst all kinds of live stock produced by us, and upon which we so much depend for making rent, are, as a rule, lower in marketable value than anything experienced by us within the last thirty years. That our present rents were fixed at a time when all our productions were selling at the higher level indicated, and when labour was at half its present cost ; that, therefore, by the paying of these rents, coupled with the paying of the doubled labour, as we have had to do during these ten years of failing crops and declining prices referred to, our resources in respect to capital and credit are exhausted. That in the future we can see no prospect of improvement in prices, but, on the contrary, every indication that our competition with the free land foreigner is as yet only in its commencement. That in these circumstances we very respectfully point out to you the utter hopelessness there is of our being able to continue to pay our present rents, and that the question now is not the propriety but the impossibility of our observing our contracts and of discharging our legal obligations from the greatly lessened sales of all our farm productions, as stated above. We, therefore, hope you will carefully and anxiously consider our case : that you will understand that we are not unwilling, but unable, to pay ; and after full deliberation, that you will arrive at the conclusion already arrived at by lead-

ing members of the Government and of the landocracy, to which you belong, that forbearance and concession are absolutely necessary at the present crisis, if tenant bankruptcy, followed by landlord bankruptcy, are to be avoided, and that, guided as we trust you will be, by the example set by these high authorities, you will be pleased to concede to us a reduction of our rents for this year by 20 per cent. under the Griffith valuation all round."

#### THE WESTERN COTTIERS AND THEIR RENT.

It would be wrong to conclude this survey of the rent question without alluding at least in passing to the ability or inability of the cottiers of the western seaboard to pay their rent. That question is governed by considerations entirely different from those which prevail in agricultural Ireland properly so called. These holdings of from one to five acres of mountain and of bog have a value, and a high one, but it is not an agricultural economic value.

Although the Irish cottier who has built his own little hut on an acre of ground in Mayo or Clare can never pay his rent out of the produce of his land, it is absurd to contend that he is therefore over-rented. His capacity to pay rent, like that of the London merchant, depends upon the wages he makes elsewhere. If the harvest money of England is good, and the demand for labour in Ireland is brisk, or if the fishing season is profitable, the Irish cottier on the small £4 and under holding pays his rent and lives and thrives in his little country seat in Mayo, enjoying the potatoes which grow in his little garden. He would have to pay ten times the rent in a London slum, and there he would not even have a potato patch attached. Hence he prefers to keep up his country seat in his native land, only leaving it during such seasons as it is necessary to enable him to make his living elsewhere. Whether the Irish labourers will be able this year to pay the rent for their villa residences on the west coast is a question on which it is difficult to express an opinion, as it is governed by considerations altogether foreign to those which decide the rise and fall of farms properly so called. The probability is that they will be very sore pressed to make both ends meet, even if the potatoes do not, as some believe is by no means improbable, go bad in the pits at Christmas.

The ability of the small cottier to pay his rent in Mayo depends not so much upon the price of farm produce, which he does not sell, but only consumes, as upon the briskness of trade in England, or the amount of remittances from America. On the Dillon estate in Mayo and Roscommon, where 4,000 tenants seated upon 100,000 acres pay a rental of £20,000 per annum, the rent is almost all earned outside the estate. The men leave in April and return in October. It used to be said that nearly 30,000 men annually left Mayo and Galway to find work in Great Britain. In 1885 there were only 9,000 migratory labourers in the whole of Connaught, nearly 7,000 of whom were found in Roscommon. Their earnings have fallen off as seriously as their numbers. They used to bring home from £7 to £9. This year they were dejected by returning with £2 or £3. That the shoe pinches pretty hard may be inferred from the fact that on the Dillon estate there has been a heavy reduction of rent, the concession of which was notified by the agent to the tenants last month. This concession was notable because it recognized the principle of returning abatement on rent already paid. The following were the terms of the notification :—

Agricultural tenants who got no permanent reduction by Land Courts or otherwise will be allowed 6s. in the pound on the year's rent due to 1st of May, 1886, provided they pay before the 1st of December, 1886. Agricultural tenants who got no

permanent reduction by Land Courts or otherwise, and who have already paid the half-year's rent due the 1st of May, 1886, will be refunded 3s. in the pound, by applying at the estate office on a certain day, of which notice will be given.

The Dillon tenants are among the best rent-paying tenants in Ireland and even paid up all the arrears that accrued during the famine years of 1846-47. Whether it is just that there should be rent exacted from tenants for the very years during which they are being kept alive by English charity and Government relief is another question which threatens to come up in very practical shape on the west coast. There are several thousand tenants in the distressed districts of Westport, Achill, and Belmullet who owe it to Mr. Tuke and his seed potatoes that they are alive at this moment. The money of the British taxpayer and of the British philanthropist kept these miserable wretches from perishing of sheer starvation, and now it is said the Irish landlord demands relentlessly his stipulated rent. Surely this is too much. If we have to keep his tenants alive in order that they go on producing rent with their customary punctuality in the future, he might at least forbear exacting his rent charge for the months during which but for our money the rent-paying automaton would have fallen to rise no more. That is a subject on which Mr. John Dillon and the National League entertain strong opinions which may yet become operative.

American money paid the rent for these people in previous years. American money is no longer forthcoming. The demand for hired labour in Ireland has fallen off. The migratory labourer cannot find work in England. The landlord of these holdings is in the same position as the owner of house property in an English manufacturing village when the mill is closed or the shipyard is idle.

Here are the particulars of one small patch of this kind of property, which have been kindly furnished me by Mr. Murrough O'Brien, who last year collected the facts with much patience from the peasants themselves. They bring out very clearly the absolute impossibility of extracting rent from the congested districts, excepting where the inhabitants can make it, like other dwellers in slum property, by working elsewhere :—

The situation of the property, county Mayo, a glen in Slieve Gamph, 900 acres, of which half is barren mountain, rocks, and turf, the other half is only cultivable by spade labour, owing to the rocks and boulders with which the ground is strewed. Number of tenants 39, population 221; the population has increased 60 per cent. since 1851 and is within 15 per cent. of what it was in 1841. The rental is £169. The annual rateable value of the land is £134. All the men are migratory labourers; absent in England every year from three to five months, occasionally staying away for two or three years at a time, remitting money to their families. At the rate of £6 a head, which is £4 below the cost of an average pauper in Irish workhouses, the subsistence of the population would cost £1,326 a year. If the gross annual produce of the land is five times the annual value, that would be £670. In addition to the earnings in England some remittances are received from friends in America. The earnings and remittances in 1885 amounted to about £500; and gross value of produce, £670; total £1,170; £1,170 then is the whole amount available for subsistence, rent, and taxes. The rents have been judicially fixed, but nevertheless are, and evidently so, very precarious. This is a sample of the better class of these agricultural slums. The men are hardy, able, active; generally intelligent. The children

look pinched with cold and insufficient feeding. They are growing up under harder conditions than have existed since 1848-9.

The drying up of the earnings of the migratory labourer make all the difference between ability to pay rent and absolute inability to pay a penny. In the single parish of Gweedore a population of 6,000, according to Mr. Tuke, used to earn £8,000 a year in Scotland, and £8,000 a year in other parts of Ulster. Some money is still earned, but it was estimated this year at about 75 per cent. lower than it used to be. It is almost impossible to form any idea of the extent of the American remittances. What with one cause and another tenants cannot pay rent. They run into arrears, and then after a time they are evicted. As a rule, in these small holdings to allow rent to run into arrears is equivalent to losing it altogether. There are at this moment seventy families at Glenbeigh, Kerry, under threat of eviction for non-payment of rent. Their parish priest declares that for some years past the whole gross produce of the holdings was not more than £15 to £20. In the struggle to make both ends meet they "scourge the land," to use Lord Lansdowne's expression, until it ceases to yield a decent crop; and thus it has come to pass that even the rates cannot be met, let alone the rent. Judge Curran had struck off the arrears, but even this twelve months' rent is more than they can pay.

#### SUMMARY.

I may, therefore, conclude the first portion of my report by recapitulating the facts which it seems to me supply a conclusive answer to the three questions which I went to Ireland to settle.

(1) Question : Has there been any all round fall in prices affording a *prima facie* justification of an abatement in the November gale of the judicial rents?

Answer : There has been in 1886 an average all round drop of 20 per cent. in the value of Irish agricultural produce upon (1) the average prices of forty years for 1846-1885; and (2) upon the average prices of the first four years of the Land Act, 1881-4. This is a fall in the prices recorded for first qualities in the best markets. It has been much heavier in the lower qualities in country markets, where much of Irish produce is sold.

(2) Question : Was this all round fall in prices foreseen by the Land Commissioners when fixing fair rents in 1881-4?

Answer : It was not foreseen, and was entirely unexpected. The Commissioners are cutting down rents now from 25 to 40 per cent., instead of their former average of 17½ per cent. All the Commissioners whom I saw declared that the fair rents they had fixed in 1881-4 had become unfair rents to-day. Some of them, like Mr. Reeves and Mr. Bomford, who are landowners as well as Commissioners, have cut their own judicial rents by 25 per cent.

(3) Question : Is the necessity for a reduction of judicial rents recognized by the better landlords?

Answer : It is so recognized by the better landlords in

every county in Ireland. Last May the judicial rents were voluntarily cut by many landlords to the extent of 14 per cent. in Ulster to 17½ per cent. in Munster. This November the reduction is still greater. Of the largest landlords in Ireland the best have this year made reductions in their judicial rents. These reductions have been made on the best managed and lowest rented estates, where most has been done for the tenants by the landlords, and where the former might naturally be expected to stand the pressure of exceptional difficulties better than the less fortunate tenants on the rack-rented estates of absentee or bankrupt landlords.

#### THE MORAL OF IT ALL.

The moral of the whole of this somewhat wearisome survey of the tenants' position is obvious. There is not a tenant in Ireland, with the inevitable exceptions who prove the rule, be he leaseholder, or ordinary yearly tenant, or the holder of a judicial lease, who has not good ground for demanding an abatement in the November gale calculated at the rate of 20 per cent. on the judicial rents fixed before 1885. In many cases, if the landlord were to bear half the loss that the fall in prices has thrown upon the tenant, he would have to remit the whole of his rent. But I wish to be scrupulously moderate, and to underestimate rather than to exaggerate the reduction which justice demands. Putting it then as low at 20 per cent. off judicial rents, which means often as much as 30, 40, and in some cases even 50 per cent. off ordinary and leasehold rents, it follows that the tenants should be encouraged to resist the payment of more than 80 per cent. of their rent, and that the Government should place every obstacle in the way of executing any eviction wherever the landlord refuses to make this minimum reduction. Ministers disclaim the dispensing power. Parliament is not sitting to arm them with the necessary authority. Public opinion, therefore, must veto the employment of the public revenue and of the forces of the Crown in evicting any tenant wherever the landlord has not made the minimum reduction which in the opinion of the more public-spirited members of his own class is imperatively required in the interests of justice. If the Government cannot protect the tenants from legalized injustice, the tenants must protect themselves by strengthening their organization and opposing an unbroken front to the men whom Sir M. Hicks-Beach has stigmatized as the worst enemies of the rights of property. The Government, no doubt, may be driven to place sheriffs and constables and soldiery at the disposal of the Shylocks of Ireland. But there is not a man who will be employed in the service, from the Chief Secretary down to the ordinary constable, who will not be heartily glad if the tenants, by steady, fearless, passive resistance, can compel the bad landlords to do what the good landlords have done already. There are no doubt exceptional cases in which an exception should be made, but if the tenants of Ireland raise the cry "no rent without a reduction," they will be claiming no more than bare justice, their action will be approved by all the best landlords in the country, and their resistance will be energetically approved by English public opinion.

## THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST ABATEMENTS.

**T**HE arguments used by the few landlords who still venture to maintain, in face of the unanimous opinion of the more intelligent members of their own class, that there is no reason for a reduction of rent all round are few. They rest for the most part upon statistics which, when examined, are found to break off at the very year when they become most important. The arguments in favour of maintaining rents as they are are, broadly speaking, three in number—

- (1) That the saleable value of tenant right has increased rather than diminished;
- (2) That the deposits in savings banks have increased;
- And (3) that the consumption of intoxicating liquors has increased.

Of course if these facts could be ascertained beyond doubt they would tend to create considerable scepticism as to the extent of the agricultural depression which prevails in Ireland this present year. Unfortunately for the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union—which parades its figures with amusing audacity—the evidence is either lacking or tells on the other side. The case of the Irish tenant for reduction of his rent is not that he was in a depressed condition in 1884, but that he is impoverished in 1886. He admits that in 1884, at the prices then ruling, he could rub along. In 1885 prices tumbled, but he did not feel the full effect of the fall until now in 1886, when the depreciation of agricultural values has reached its worst. It is for 1886, therefore, and not for 1884, that evidence should be forthcoming concerning the three points on which the landlords rely for the resisting of reductions.

### THE SELLING VALUE OF TENANT RIGHT.

Turning to the Notes of the I.L.P.U. on the present condition of the land question, I find that the statistics as to the sales of tenant right come down to 1885 only; and that for this year with all their industry and all their agents in various parts of the kingdom they have only been able to secure returns of sales of tenant right from twelve counties out of thirty-two in Ireland. The total number of which they have been able to secure information is under fifty, and of these thirty-five took place in Ulster. So far, therefore, the evidence as to the value of tenant right in the three provinces in 1886 is based upon fifteen transactions, in which the number of years' purchase varied from six to eleven and a half, the average being about eight years. The I.L.P.U. state that 1,200 sales of tenant right have taken place between 1881 and 1885; but as they are not tabulated in counties it is difficult to compare them with the sales recorded this year. The honorary secretary of the executive committee of the Landowners' and Incumbents' Association obtained in 1885 the return of 315 sales of tenant right between 1881 and 1884. Comparing these, which are more intelligible and definite for the purpose of comparison, with the few statistics of sales set out by the I.L.P.U. as having taken place in 1886, we

find that there has been a small but appreciable drop in the value of tenant right.

In Ulster.	No.	1881-4. Years' Purchase	No.	1886. Years' Purchase
Armagh.....	5	18.0	1	11.5
Donegal .....	13	27.0	1	16.7
Fermanagh .....	13	8.5	10	14.0
Down .....	24	16.0	3	10.5
Monaghan .....	10	15.7	19	10.0
Wexford .....	9	7.3	3	8.0
Queen's County ...	10	11.0	1	7.5
Kildare .....	8	10.3	3	8.0
Cork .....	19	13.5	1	21.0
Tipperary.....	9	8.4	1	7.5
Limerick .....	14	9.0	1	5.0
Mayo.....	20	8.8	1	10.5
Roscommon.....	—	6.4	3	5.0

The returns, however, are far too few to build an argument upon.

### TENANT RIGHT UNSALEABLE.

The difficulty of the farmer, however, is not that he gets a less price for his tenant right when he sells it, but that he often cannot sell it at all. Upon this point the Ulster farmers seem to be tolerably unanimous. Mr. MacElroy, secretary of the Central Antrim Tenant Farmers' Association, who was examined before the Royal Commission which is now making its inquiries in Ireland, in sending me the return of sales which took place in the immediate neighbourhood of Ballymoney, calls attention to the fact that the sum paid for the tenant right in his neighbourhood fell from £4,218 in 1884 to £1,603 in 1886. He says:—

One of my last sales was that of a farm of thirty acres, subject to a head rent of £2 15s. 5d. About eight years ago two brothers returned from New Zealand to their native place. In 1880 they bought the fee simple of this holding at £600, paid £200 for the tenant right interest, built a house which cost about £200—total, £1,000. The combined interest was sold about a fortnight ago and fetched only £500.

Doubtless too much was given for it in 1880, but the case is an illustration of how common sense is beginning to rule the market. The fall in the price of tenant right is not so apparent in the figures realized as in the declining number of sales. No farm has now any chance of being sold unless it possesses some special advantage. Middling and poor lots are hardly ever offered for sale, at least not recently, as it is known there would be little competition for them, the land not being worth more than the rent. For heavy clay soils there is no demand whatever, and the prospects of sales generally are so uncertain that many farmers who are most anxious to retire prefer to "hold on" rather than sell at a reduced price or have an abortive sale. Even when a good farm is offered the number of competitors is small in comparison with that of former years.

Mr. Shillington, of Portadown, estimated the drop in value in tenant right in Ulster at from 25 to 50 per cent. on holdings which have really changed hands, but estimated the depreciation of the tenants' interest as much more than that, taking account of the great number of farms which could not be sold at any price. Trustworthy statistics of any kind concerning tenant right in the south and west are exceedingly difficult to procure. At the present time tenant right is practically unsaleable except with the goodwill of the tenant. No person would buy the tenant right of a farmer who was compelled to sell under pressure of landlord or creditor.

## THE PARADOXES OF TENANT RIGHT.

Over and above all these considerations, however, it should be remembered that tenant right in Ireland consists of two very different things. The first is the actual improvement which the tenant has made in the land, such as houses, outbuildings, fences, &c., which represent solid outlay. In many cases this represents a good round sum, equal in value to the fee simple. Over and above that there is the value of the privilege of occupying the land, the actual rent of which is below the competition rent. That is to say, the section that is not represented by actual improvements standing upon the farm is the capitalized value of the difference between the actual rent and the competition rent. Of course, in theory, the moment the actual rent is raised to the competition rent, or if the value of the competition rent falls to the level of the actual rent, this section of tenant right disappears. It is absurd to regard as property in any sense of the word a right of occupancy in land rented up to its full value; but so great has been the pressure of population on the land, and so irrational the earth hunger of the Irish Celt, that nothing is more notorious than his readiness to pay large sums down for the tenant right of farms on which the existing selling tenant has actually been losing money year by year. Logically, tenant right and rack rent cannot co-exist; but in Ireland the dual partnership between landlord and tenant has taken so firm a hold upon the people's mind that the tenant is unable to see what to outsiders seems a sufficiently obvious fact—namely, that the tenant's share in the partnership is liable to be entirely obliterated. He continues to regard himself as possessed of property in his farm, even when every penny of the dividend he earns is due to the landlord, and he is often able to sell his tenant right for the sake of title, to purchasers who are well aware that the landlord's rent swallows up all the profit.

The following illustration may simplify a matter which is obscure at the best. Take a certain farm let at £100 a year, and suppose the value of the fee simple to be £2,000. The tenant's improvements represent a capital value of £600, and the tenant right represents another £400. Thus the estate is worth £3,000—£2,000 for fee simple, and £1,000 for the tenant's interest. Supposing that 5 per cent. is the legitimate return as profit of capital invested, the profit on the farm should amount to £150 a year, £100 of which goes to the landlord, while the remaining £50 goes to the tenant—£30 for the interest on his improvement, and £20 profit on his share of the farm. So long as the profits of the farm are £150 per annum, over the above cost of cultivation, all goes well, and the tenant right in the farm would be legitimately sold for £1,000. But suppose prices fall so that the profits are reduced from £150 to £130. The tenant's interest on his £400 tenant right disappears altogether; and if that state of things should be permanent, the tenant right in the farm, excluding the value of buildings, would disappear, because no dividend would remain after paying interest on tenant's improvement and the landlord's rent. Now, suppose that profit still further diminishes until it is only £100 per annum. The whole of the tenant's interest, including his outlay on buildings, is wiped out, and, strictly speaking, the tenant has no interest in the farm to sell. Nevertheless he often sells it, and that to a purchaser who is well aware of the position of affairs.

## THE POSITION OF THE DUAL OWNERS.

The position of the dual partners in the land ownership in Ireland is somewhat analogous to that of the debenture holders and ordinary shareholders in a railway. Whatever profits the partners earn go first to pay interest on debentures, which represents the rent. Until that is paid, no dividend can be declared upon ordinary stock. The tenant's share in the partnership is that of the ordinary shareholder, who can only be paid out of the earnings of the year after payment in full has been made of interest on the debentures, not only for that year, but for any preceding year on which the profits were not sufficient to pay the debenture holders in full. The fee simple of an estate represents debenture capital; tenant right represents ordinary stock; and the moment the interest on debentures cannot be paid out of the earnings of the year ordinary stock should become valueless, excepting for any prospective increase in the value of the property. That is the hard logic of the case; but it is not the way in which things are looked at in Ireland. Nothing is more common than for tenants to pay several years' purchase of the rent of their holdings, and then immediately to go to the Land Court to urge that the rent should be reduced, although they knew perfectly well what it was before they took the farm.

## THE TENANTS' LOST PROPERTY.

This aspect of the effect of a fall in prices on dual ownership is often ignored by those who lay great stress upon the extent to which the reductions proposed by the tenant eat into a landlord's property. They forget that the tenant has a property in Irish land quite as important to him as the fee simple is to the landlord. According to the recorded sales of tenant right, the average number of years' purchase which it brought on farms under judicial rents was  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in Connaught, 11 in Leinster, 12 in Munster, and  $19\frac{1}{2}$  in Ulster, or, if we average them all round, about 13 years' purchase for the whole of Ireland. Reckoning the rent roughly for convenience' sake at £10,000,000, and reckoning the fee simple as worth twenty years' purchase, the value of Irish land would be as follows, assuming the rental to be fixed at £10,000,000:—

	Years' Purchase.	Value of Interest.
Landlord—Fee Simple .....	20	£200,000,000
Tenant—Tenant Right .....	13	130,000,000
		£330,000,000

Of this £200,000,000 is debenture, and £130,000,000 ordinary stock. The latter is not considered as if it were property, and its disappearance is not reckoned as if it were a grievance, except by the tenants. Hence economic causes are allowed to eat into tenant right, and the tenant is held to have suffered no wrong; but if the tenant wishes to allow these same causes to eat into the fee simple, there is a cry of confiscation. What is going on in Ireland is an attempt on the part of the ordinary shareholder to convert his landlord's debentures into preference stock. The difference between debentures and preference is that the latter can only claim a dividend on the earnings of the current year, whereas the surplus profits of any year can be taken to meet the interest on debentures. The tenant is not only the holder of ordinary stock, he is also labour, rolling stock, and cost of management. In his latter capacity he ranks first. As a holder of ordinary stock or tenant right he ranks last. If rent were converted from debenture into preference stock, and the respective interests registered, a long

step would be taken to simplifying the land question, if only by enabling the public to understand that the landlord is by no means the only owner of Irish land, and that by too great insistence on the legal rights of the owner of two hundred millions' worth of property in land you can utterly extinguish £130,000,000 worth of landed property that is vested in the tenants. The idea that the landlord is sole owner continually leads to a concentration of sympathy which should be equally shared by his partner, who is the "under dog." Tenant right is also used in a misleading sense when land is sold subject to a mere head rent. In that case it is a misnomer to speak of it as a sale of tenant right. The tenant really possesses the land subject to a small charge. On one large estate the tenant right was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times as valuable as the fee. That is to say, if the value of an acre was 35s. a year, 10s. of it belonged to the landlord and 25s. to the tenant. A much heavier price will be paid for the tenant right on such an estate than elsewhere; but there exists no means of discriminating between one set of cases and another.

#### "HOW VERY IRISH."

Still more extraordinary and incomprehensible to English ideas is the fact that an Irishman will think nothing of paying heavily for the tenant right of a farm and then of paying a further sum for the fee simple, much in excess of that which he would pay if the tenant right and fee simple were vested in the same owner. Suppose, for instance, that the owner of the fees simple in the farm above mentioned were to buy out his tenant, and pay him £1,000 for his tenant right. The value of the holding would then be £3,000, and he ought to be able to dispose of it to a purchaser for that sum. If, however, he wished to do so, he would probably have to create a tenant in order that the buyer might pay the £3,000 in two portions. To the landlord who had the tenant right in his possession he would pay £2,000 only; but if the landlord had created a tenant he would have no objection to pay a further £1,000 to the tenant for the right of occupancy. He would refuse to pay £3,000 to the landlord for both the fee simple and tenant right. Difference of opinion exists in some quarters as to how far this extraordinary doctrine prevails; but there is no doubt it exists in many cases. The only deduction from this seems to be that two and two do not make four in the minds of some Irishmen.

#### TENANT RIGHT NOT AN INVESTMENT BUT A DEPOSIT.

Another thing must be borne in mind in estimating the value of evidence concerning sales of tenant right after the profits have fallen below the margin of rent. Outlets for capital and opportunities for making a livelihood in Ireland are so limited that there is hardly any other opening except agriculture. "To get a bit of land" at any cost is the great *desideratum* of the ordinary peasant. As the existing tenants cling tenaciously to their holdings it is necessary to make it worth their while to make room for a new comer; hence sums of money are paid down for tenant right which bear no relation whatever to the commercial value of the holding, being "smart" money to be paid as a fine on apprenticeship necessary to open the doors of the profession to a new comer. Tenant right was also regarded by the Irish peasant as a secure method of depositing his money. If he places his money in the bank he gets 1 per cent. on his deposit and no other consideration or any other indirect advantage. If, on the other hand, he sinks the sum of money in the purchase of a tenant right he becomes the joint

owner of a bit of land, and acquires a status and means of livelihood in the country which more than compensates for the loss of the 1 per cent. which he would have gained had he allowed his money to remain on deposit at the bank. Then when he wished to realize he found little difficulty in the past in selling his tenant right for as much as he gave for it.

#### TENANT RIGHT AND DIAMONDS.

The nearest analogy to tenant right that I can suggest is the purchase of diamonds. The value of a diamond, like the value of a tenant right, is often purely fictitious. Regarded as an investment, money sunk in the purchase of precious stones yields nothing; unless, of course, in the progress of time the value of diamonds in the market should increase. In neither can he realize any profit before sale. The same consideration holds good in the case of tenant right. If the value of land went up in the market the tenant would be able to get more for his right; but in the meantime it is exactly like a diamond necklace. It produces no interest; but it is a safe method of locking up money so that it may at any time be available, and in the meantime the investment increases the personal and social importance of its owner.

#### TENANT RIGHT STATISTICS.

It is obvious that to use statistics of purchases made under these considerations, as if the investment of money in tenant right were governed by commercial considerations, tends to lead us sorely astray. Another cause which vitiates the value of such returns is that in many cases—and in nearly all cases where a very high price has been given for tenant right—it will be found on examination that it was either accommodation land convenient to the purchaser's holding, or that it included valuable buildings, which were wanted for residence, or it might be—as often happens—that it was bought to keep out, at any cost, some unpopular neighbour who would otherwise have had a right of way over the buyer's farm. There are many Naboth's vineyards in Ireland, and the price which Ahab is willing to pay cannot be accepted as any indication of the market value of Irish land.

#### THE SAVINGS BANK ARGUMENT.

The saving banks deposits argument is one of the most fallacious that can be adduced in order to prove that the Irish farmers are prospering, (1) because the statistics of money deposits in the saving banks upon which the I.L.P.U. rely do not come down to a later period than 1884. They have no statistics as to the money deposited in either 1885 or 1886. It is said that in 1885 the total amount of deposits was £4,200,000, which if true shows a falling off of £143,000 on the figures of 1884. The figures for 1886 are not yet complete; but even if they were to show a small increase, that would not affect the question in any way. The peasants of Ireland seldom or never deposit in savings banks. The bulk of the money is saved by townspeople or others in receipt of weekly wages. And, after all, when so much is talked about the increase of money in the savings banks, it is forgotten that the total amount, including all that is saved by dwellers in Dublin, Belfast, and Cork, is only £4,300,000, which does not amount to an average of more than about 4s. per acre for the whole of Ireland. The increase that has taken place between '80 and '85 is less than one million, or about 4s. per head of the population. When it is remembered that within that period Irish rent has been reduced by half a million a year, the argument from the savings bank deposits must be admitted to be very weak. To

argue that the Irish farmers can this year pay twelve millions and a half of rent to their landlords because somebody else has four and a quarter millions in the savings bank is not exactly a convincing way of putting it.

In discussing this question up and down the country I found practically a unanimity among those who have to do with farmers as to the fact that when farmers save it is not in the savings bank that they place their money. A deposit on receipt in the bank is their chief resort, and into that deposit they will never break except under the very greatest pressure. Nothing is more common than for a farmer to borrow £50 at 6 per cent. from the bank that holds £200 of his at 1 per cent. He will pay 5 per cent. for the use of his own money. This, which seems absurd enough at first view, has a foundation of sound common-sense. A deposit received is the stored-up fortune of the depositor. If he break into it, he may replace it or not as he thinks fit. The younger members of his family will press him to spend it, or to allow them to spend it in better living, better clothes, or in the little luxuries which are all too few in the life of the Irish peasant. The old man, fearing lest he should be unable to resist the pressure of the younger branches of his family, infinitely prefers to take £50 out of the bank at 6 per cent. than to break in upon his cherished store. The loan from the bank must in any case be repaid.

#### THE ARGUMENT FROM WHISKY.

Another favourite argument of the landlords is that the tenants can very well afford to pay their rents, because they are drinking more whisky than ever. But on turning to the Notes of the I.L.P.U. on the subject, I find that last year the consumption of both beer and spirits showed a marked falling off. I quote their figures :—

	Consumption per Head in Gallons.	Money Value.
1884-1885 .....	15.948 1.023}	£2 4 4
1885-1886 .....	15.567 0.966}	£2 2 8

What the figures for the present year may be cannot as yet be stated, but it is probable that they will show a further decrease. So far, therefore, as argument from the consumption of liquor goes, it tells in the opposite direction. It has not increased in the two last years;

on the contrary, it is diminishing, although not to the extent that might in the interest of the Irish themselves be wished. The sale of whisky has steadily declined. In the first six months of 1884 the quantity entered for consumption was 2,423,000 gallons. In the first six months of 1885 it fell to 2,343,000 gallons, and in 1885 it was only 2,209,000 gallons—a drop equal to 428,000 gallons per annum in the space of two years.

#### TWO OTHER ARGUMENTS.

Another favourite assertion is that the live stock in Ireland has increased. But how is this made out? Not by comparing 1886 with 1885 or 1884, but by comparing the figures of 1886, which are collected at the beginning of the year, with the figures of 1883. But the contention is that the Irish farmer was fairly able to hold his own till the spring of 1885, when his cattle were counted. It was only as that year progressed that prices fell, and the full effect of the present low prices will not be seen until we have the live stock returns of 1887. Those of 1886, however, are serious enough. Of the rent-paying pigs there has been a decrease of 5,959 on the returns of 1885. Sheep have fallen off 110,334, and cattle 44,824. Asses have also fallen off by 907. Horses alone have increased, but the increase is only 2,113, and it is entirely due to the colts bred in 1884, before prices fell. Thus, as I showed in a preceding page, while the fall in prices is equivalent to an increased exaction from the tenant of 7,000 fat pigs, 18,950 sheep, and 22,500 fat cattle, besides corresponding quantities of grain, hay, and potatoes, the agricultural returns show that, instead of having increased his stock so as to meet this extra charge, he has depleted it by 6,000 pigs, 110,000 sheep, and 44,000 cattle.

It is further alleged that prices to-day, although lower than the average of the last forty years, are pretty much the same as they were in 1852; and it is argued that because the present or higher rents were paid in 1852, therefore they can be paid to-day. It is difficult to state such a contention gravely. To go back to 1852 is to insist upon undoing the work that has been slowly accomplished in the lifetime of a generation. The habits and customs of the people who live in Ireland to-day are not the habits and customs of the inhabitants of 1852. They are an altogether different kind of people; and we might as well go back to antediluvian times as to 1852.

## THE STORY OF THE WOODFORD EVICTIONS.

ALL over Ireland this autumn "Woodford" has been the watchword of the agitation, and the following story of the Woodford evictions will enable the English reader to understand something of the importance which is attached to the struggle in the Galway upland which has become the cockpit of Ireland.

#### THE CLANRICARDES AND THEIR ESTATE.

Landlordism in Ireland will fight its last fight on famous battle-ground. There is historic justice and an all-pervading sense of the fitness of things in the fact

that the first tussle, which will open the last chapter of a bloodstained story, will take place on the estate of the Marquis of Clanricarde. Time was when Irish landlordism was a thing erect, alive, vigorous, and terrible to look upon. Philanthropy was not one of its strong points, nor farsighted wisdom, but it was strong and brave, and its sins were the sins of strength and courage. It was the rod with which the English race ruled the Irishry. It governed Ireland in its own wayward way, and took its own wages for doing so from its subject serfs. When the Normans conquered Ireland they built

up the edifice of the new State on the solid piers of a territorial nobility. Each noble was as the pier of an arch, and his castellated seat in its massive strength was but the outward and visible sign of the principle of authority which was incarnated in the person of each feudal chief. They builded well, those ancient builders, and they laid their foundations deep down below the roaring floods of turbulence and the shifting sands of faction on the bedrock of Norman might and Norman skill. Their castles, or the ruins of them, are still to be seen in Ireland—mute witnesses of a past that returns not, the grim tombstones of an order that has passed away.

Landlordism in Ireland is dead, but the stench of its decaying remains still pollutes the air. Its "corpse crawls round unburied"—crying aloud, indeed, in dolorous accents of the vampire sort for decent burial—which, happily, will not be long delayed. And the whole story of it, from first page to last, is bound up with the Clanricarde estate. Alike in glory and in shame the Clanricardes have played a leading part in the great drama of foreign domination, and it would be but in keeping with all that has passed that it should be in war against a Clanricarde that the Irish revolution of our day should win its final and its crowning victory.

#### CHARLEMAGNE, CŒUR DE LION, AND THE RED HAND.

William Fitz Adelm de Burgh was sent by Henry II. seven centuries ago to Ireland to receive the submission of Roderick the King of Connaught and the King of Meath. He founded there, says an old writer, "one of the best and noblest families, which has yielded many brave and worthy men that have proved eminently serviceable to their King and country, whereby the name, estate, and family are preserved in great honour and reputation to this day." It was he who was the first Viceroy of Ireland in fact, although not in title. Four years after he published the famous Bull whereby Pope Adrian constituted the English King Lord of Ireland, he received as a grant from his Royal master a great part of the province of Connaught. From this De Burgh, whose wife was a bastard of the Lion Heart, has descended the present Marquis of Clanricarde, and the Clanricarde estate in Galway is the relic of the great part of Connaught granted in 1179 to his illustrious progenitor.

The family had made its name in the fighting fashion of those days long before the conquest of Ireland. Robert, the half-brother of William the Conqueror, had fought at the battle of Hastings, and, before that epoch-making day, his father had assumed the surname of De Burgh, "because he was Governor of the chief towns of France, besides being General of the King's forces." Through this first De Burgh, the Clanricardes claim direct descent from Charlemagne; through the wife of the first Irish De Burgh they are descended from Richard Cœur de Lion. To complete their claims to high descent, the grandson of the Lion Heart married the great-granddaughter of the Red Hand, who was King of Connaught in the days when Ireland had Home Rule. Thus the best blood of the most famous heroes of England, France, and Ireland flows in the veins of the Clanricardes, and they played century after century in Ireland a part not unbecoming nobles of such heroic descent. Richard the Great in the thirteenth century built the castle of Galway, and four years later strengthened his hold on Connaught by erecting the castle at Loughrea—Loughrea, now the centre of the National League in those parts, where at the time of my visit Lord Clanricarde's agent sat secluded in the rent office, before the gates of which paced the constable sentries, without whose constant presence his life would not be worth five minutes' purchase.

#### THE DE BURGHS PAST AND PRESENT.

The De Burghs, after being Lords of Connaught, became Earls of Ulster. The third of the title, William, the son of the Red Earl, who in the time of the third Henry was the most powerful man in Ireland, was assassinated. The country people rose and slaughtered more than three hundred persons to avenge his death—a notable incident of the fourteenth century, which stands out in startling contrast to the feeling prevailing among the country folk to-day. The Red Earl was no light-handed humanitarian in his day, but to avenge the murder of his son the whole country side rose in arms. To-day, if the last of the name were to share the fate of his remote progenitor, not a single peasant in all Galway would heave a sigh. It is a far cry to the fourteenth century, but in nothing is the contrast more marked than in the devotion which the fathers of the serfs of Clanricarde showed to the Lord of Connaught, and the detestation with which their sons regard the rent-charger of Piccadilly. They were a great house in the olden days were the Burkes—for so the name was spelled after a time—and their chiefs appear to have done a lion's share of the fighting and the governing of these unquiet centuries. "Defend me and spend me," the prayer of the Irish peasant, was answered by them in full measure. Nor did they shrink from spending their own blood in the wars as freely as they spent that of their humblest men-at-arms.

The first De Burgh who was Lord of Clanricarde was son-in-law of the Earl of Warwick. Under the Tudors, as under the Plantagenets, the family did yeoman's service to the Crown. Henry VIII. enriched the first Earl of Clanricarde with the fat lands of the monastery that stood in the diocese of Clonfert, and the second Earl justified the Royal bounty by helping to smite the invading Scotch, who were beaten at the battle of the Moye in 1553. The fourth Earl won the surname of Kinsale by the bravery with which he defended that place against the Irish, who had risen in rebellion against the English yoke, and, marrying into the family of the Walsingham and the Essex, attained high favour in Court in the heroic Elizabethan age. Under the Stuarts the earldom nearly perished, the ninth earl having commanded an infantry regiment at Aughrim against the forces of King William. But the good luck of the family prevailed, and the first Parliament of Queen Anne restored him to his estates.

It would have been better if the attainder had not been annulled, and the history of the Clanricardes had ended at the field of Aughrim. Subsequent Clanricardes have lived and died and been forgotten until we come to the immediate predecessor of the present Marquis, Ulick de Burgh, grandson of Canning, and last of the line known to the men of Galway. He was an Irish landlord of the older type. He was described to me in enthusiastic terms by an Irish landlord who knew him well as "the best Irishman that ever lived," a verdict which says little for the virtues of the race. During the three days that I spent on the Clanricarde property I heard a good deal about the dead Marquis. His memory was not in the sweetest of odour among his tenants. Masterful, overbearing, passionate, self-indulgent, he was; still, with all his vices he was not detested. He had been on the whole an easy, freehanded, and reckless man.

#### THE FIRST REVOLT.

In the old days the Marquis was master of his domain. The representation of Galway was little more than a perquisite of his family. It used to be said that Clanricarde could return his grey mare for Galway if he pleased.

This was accepted as an ordinance of fate by his tenants. But at last, before the ballot, there came a change. How it came about no one seems exactly to know, but the year 1872, immediately before the Ballot Act was passed, the revolt of the Irish peasants began. It is usually said that it was the defeat of the landlord's candidate in Kerry which first made the ground move beneath the landlords' feet. Kerry, no doubt, was a portent, but Kerry followed Galway. The election of 1872, in which Captain Nolan, standing as a Home Ruler under the old franchise, with open voting, polled 2,823 votes, against 658 recorded for the Hon. W. le Poer Trench, in whose support landlordism had combined all its forces, was the first warning given as to what was coming in Ireland. It was a crushing blow—a thunderbolt out of the blue. For more than twenty years a Burke or a Dunkellin had been returned with such undeviating regularity for Galway that it seemed impossible that any one but a Burke or the nominee of a Burke could hope to carry the county. Captain Nolan was subsequently unseated on petition, but the blow had been delivered and it had struck home. Lord Clanricarde never forgave the revolt of Galway. He avenged the display of independence in characteristic fashion. Tenants who had voted for Captain Nolan had their rents raised, and I was told when in Dublin by the Lord Mayor that the Marquis, on his deathbed, is even said to have left behind him as a parting injunction to his son and heir the duty of avenging the defeat of Mr. Trench upon his ungrateful tenantry. What was the precise cause for gratitude I did not hear, nor have I been able subsequently to discover, save and except the number of jobs which he executed for Galway aspirants after post office employment. This, however, was too much like the great bounty of the worthy who built a bridge at the expense of the county to touch even the susceptible heart of an Irish peasant. Whatever truth there may be in the story the rents of the Clanricarde tenantry were raised as the leases fell in after the election went against Clanricarde's nominee. It may be that they could bear the rise; it may be that there was no connection between the election and the revaluation of the estate; all that need be said is that the rise followed the election, that some of the rents so raised have since been cut down by 50 per cent. by the Land Court, and that every one asserts in Woodford that those who supported Mr. Trench continued to pay the old rent, while the supporters of Captain Nolan were subjected to increases all round. "My mother's sister," said a tenant to me, as we sat talking of the Clanricarde estate, "is paying £10 a year this year, and has been paying it ever since 1872 because my uncle voted for Captain Nolan. He is dead and gone, but the payment continues that was put upon him to teach him what it meant to vote against his landlord. £140 it is that she has been fined for not voting for Mr. Trench, and it will cost her four shillings a week as long as she lives."

#### AND ITS PENALTY.

This I am assured is an under statement of what happened in many cases. In one case a rent of £15 was put up to £30 in 1872, and kept at £30 until it was put back to £15 by the Land Court this year. Lord Clanricarde would not deny that the rents were raised at that time. The accuracy of the statement was confirmed by the late agent and by his successor. Of course he would deny now that it was done for political motives. But on the estate no one would believe his denial. Here is a list of eleven names of occupiers of holdings which were given to me as among those who are to this day paying heavily because of the part they

took in giving free expression to their political convictions fourteen years ago:

	Old Rent.			New Rent.			Annual fine for Independence.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Mary Donnelly	88	0	0	112	0	0	24	0	0
J. S. Bourke .....	50	10	0	82	10	0	32	0	0
John Whyte.....	27	0	0	38	10	0	11	10	0
Pat Kemple.....	32	6	6	36	13	0	4	6	6
Thomas Kemple.....	22	10	0	30	10	6	8	0	6
Patrick McDermott	35	0	0	47	8	0	2	8	0
Denis Tuohy .....	10	0	0	14	10	0	4	10	0
Pat Fahy .....	24	0	0	33	0	0	9	0	0
Michael Quinn.....	12	12	6	14	1	0	1	8	6
Timothy Clarke .....	18	0	0	25	0	0	7	0	0
Francis Glasby.....	19	8	0	25	4	0	5	16	0
	339	7	0	459	6	6	119	19	6

Previously, in 1868, the above rents had been increased by sums varying from £1 to £14 a year. The adjoining lands were held under leases, else they would be raised also. The last life in the above leases lapsed about six months ago.

The Marquis of Clanricarde seems to have made a fairly good thing out of the fine on independence. Each of these eleven families has to raise from an area strictly limited an additional sum of between £10 and £11 per annum, just about the cost of maintaining one average pauper in an Irish workhouse. To have a pauper placed on your back to feed and clothe for ever, that was the equivalent to the penalty for voting according to your conscience, which is exacted to this day on the Clanricarde estate. Can it be wondered at that men who believe their rents were put up 33 per cent. to avenge a political defeat fail to see the scandal of asking that rents should come down this year 40 per cent. to meet a period of admitted universal depression?

#### IS THERE A MARQUIS OF CLANRICARDE?

The present Marquis of Clanricarde—but here I pause. Is there a Marquis of Clanricarde? There was once. When the former Marquis was buried those who were present declare that among the mourners was a young man whom bystanders pointed out as the new Marquis. He was silent, and after the funeral he disappeared, nor has he ever been seen again in those parts. When his mother died he never appeared at the funeral. She was laid in her grave without the presence of her son, and the guests who came to do the last honours to the Marchioness enjoyed the hospitality not of the Marquis but of the hotel. No tenant on all the Clanricarde estates has seen his landlord, or has had ocular or aural proof of his existence. They have written him occasionally; notably this year, when the Bishop Coadjutor of Clonfert—a landlord's bishop, if there be one in all Ireland—humbly memorialized him to take compassion upon the hapless state of the tenants, but they received no reply. It was as if they addressed their petitions to the ghost of a Marquis. The vasty deep swallowed up their cries, their petitions, their memorials. Nor was even an echo to be heard in the silence. My own experience is not dissimilar. Twice have attempts been made to obtain interviews with this mysterious Marquis, but in vain. I wrote him on my return, stating that I had visited his estates, and desired to report to him how things actually stood. I received no answer. An attempt to ascertain what reply he had to make to the attacks made upon him by his enemies—or his tenants, for the two terms are

synonymous—met with the same failure. Only once have I met a living man who claimed to have seen the Marquis. He was a man who is said to have been identified as the Wandering Jew, and even he had not seen the Marquis for many years. Directories and Peerages give his address as the Albany, Piccadilly, and as the letters do not return through the Dead Letter Office there must be some one there; but if he be living he dwells secluded and invisible as in an enchanter's castle.

#### THE MYTHICAL CLANRACKRENT.

The unknown being ever terrible and marvellous, it affords a broad blank canvas on which the nimble fancy of man can luxuriate at will. And thus it has come to pass that in place of a real person of their own flesh and blood, swayed by the same sympathies, passions, and aspirations as themselves, the tenantry of Lord Clanricarde have constructed a strange entity whom they call by his name, but which surely bears no resemblance to mortal man, and none at all to the last of the famous house which traces its descent from Charlemagne and the Lion Heart. The real Marquis may be a Lord Shaftesbury for aught I know, in physique he may be an Apollo, and in intellect a Newton. Of him I cannot speak, for of him I know nothing, never having even set eyes upon him, any more than if I were one of his Irish tenants. If he be the personification of all the virtues and all the talents, then to the peasant of Woodford or Portumna the real Marquis is as if he were not. His Marquis—the only Marquis of whom he has any knowledge—is a mythical monster, whom he describes as the Marquis of Clanrackrent. But there would be some regret if Clanrackrent were to die. The National League would lose their most useful supporter—one incarnate argument in favour of their existence. His life is in no danger from the hand of the assassin. If the I.L.P.U. were for the good of the cause to hire a murderer to remove Clanricarde, he would be protected by a bodyguard of Nationalists, who have the deepest interest in the preservation of their mythical illustration of landlordism at its worst. Popular imagination has transformed the unknown, real Clanricarde into a veritable but invisible vampire, who lives and thrives on what he draws from the life blood of his tenants.

#### THE CLANRICARDE ESTATE.

The Clanricarde domain in Galway consists of several estates, of which that of Woodford is much the most famous, although, perhaps, the smallest of them all. These estates, named respectively the Loughrea, Portumna, Mellick, Woodford, Kilmore, Craughwell, Derrybrien, and Crossmacrenna, lie in the south-east of Galway, on the borders of Clare. Across the Shannon, which broadens out into Lough Derg, lie the fertile lands of Tipperary—"bloody Tip," as it is familiarly styled, in tribute to its reputation long ago. At present there is not a more peaceful county in all Ireland, "because," explained a Woodford man to whom the fact was pointed out, "because the Tipperary men did their shooting in time." The area of the Clanricarde estate is 52,601 acres, and the valuation £20,793, or about eight shillings an acre. A great deal of the land is bog and wilderness. The rent of the farms on the estate is not much in excess of the valuations, running on four evicted farms for 15s. and upwards. The land has the reputation in the neighbourhood of being low rented, and it is let at 75 per cent. below that of Lewis, which shares with it the evil notoriety of recent evictions. A few of the Woodford tenants have taken judicial leases, the rest were not encouraged to follow their example, inasmuch as the judicial rents

showed no appreciable reduction on the old rent, and the cost of application and appeal more than wiped away the margin of gain. That, however, was two or three years ago, and I am willing to accept the decisions of the Land Commission as proving that the Woodford tenant had then no serious cause to complain of being rack-rented.

#### LEVYING RENTS ON TENANTS' IMPROVEMENTS.

This is not the opinion in Woodford, where the tenants tenaciously maintain that if Healy's clause were properly applied, and no rent were charged on the improvements of a tenant or of his predecessor in title, the rents would be reduced to a mere song. For all that is rentable on the Woodford estate is the work of the tenants. It is a mountainous estate, and the farms stand out clear and distinct from the midst of boulders and heather, oases of verdure, surrounded by waste, good for grouse perhaps, and the wild geese, but not worth more than half-a-crown an acre. Over the mountain-side are scattered the little holdings, their fields of meadow and stubble like arrangements in green and gold, around the thatched cottage tenanted by the peasant who has established for himself a home, where, but for his industry and labour, no blade of grass would grow. You ask who drained the bog, and you are told the tenant. It is he who piled fences, who grubbed out the stones, who sowed the grass, who manured the fields, who dug the well, who put up the outbuildings, who built his cottage, and who made the road across the fields. The tenant did everything, the landlord nothing. If the tenant leaves the farm to-day it relapses into waste again. Nothing but the incessant, unremitting toil of the labouring man keeps these emerald patches green in the midst of the surrounding black. For the privilege of converting a bleak mountain-side into arable and grazing land Lord Clanricarde charges them a rental of about £800 a year. The tenants consider that if justice were done the fee simple would be made over to them at once, as they have paid the prairie value of their lands over and over again, and all that is not prairie is manifestly their own creation. That is at the back of the Woodford mind, but it is not pressed. They have never struck against the payment of rent. They have paid rent from time immemorial with the utmost punctuality and exactitude. There is as little arrear in the Clanricarde estate as on any in all Ireland. The agent has to render accounts every three months to the Marquis in the Albany, and woe be unto him if he allows the payments of the peasants to fall into arrear! To that I make no objection. It is better for tenants to be compelled to pay up smart than to allow them to heap up a great burden of arrears. How, then, has it come about that on this estate the fight should be so fierce?

#### THE DEMAND FOR 25 PER CENT ABATEMENT.

The story of the struggle which an excited and magniloquent orator assures them is to make the name of Woodford famous as that of the Thermopylae and Marathon of Irish freedom is very simple. Last year prices fell 20 per cent. below their old average. The neighbouring landowners gave reductions. Colonel Daly and Lord Dunsandle freely, and Sir H. Burke after a struggle, gave 15 per cent. reduction on their judicial rents. Lord Clanricarde gave nothing. Some of his Portumna tenants applied to the Land Court for a reduction of their rent. Pending the hearing of their application, the tenantry decided to ask for a temporary abatement. The Woodford men proposed to ask for 50 per cent. The Portumna tenants, led by the Bishop of Clonfert,

fert, thought that 50 per cent. savoured of confiscation, and decided to ask 25 per cent. Thereupon the Woodford men fell into line with their neighbours at Portumna, and preferred a joint demand for a temporary abatement of 25 per cent. It was refused. I heard the story from all sides ; and I gathered that the demand for the 50 per cent. had been preferred at first in somewhat peremptory fashion, and that this had something to do with the bitterness subsequently displayed by both parties. It is a somewhat murderous region, is the vicinity of Loughrea. Mr. Blake, the last agent, was shot dead, and the same fate had overtaken one Finlay, a process-server, early in the spring. Around Loughrea the county map is starred with murders, and the Woodford tenants, relying, perhaps, too much on the gory reputation of the district, tried to bounce the reduction through. Mr. Joyce, the new agent, was not the man to be browbeaten. The demand seemed to him a challenge to a trial of strength rather than a business-like proposal, and he prepared for the struggle. When the tenants came again with their reduced demand for 25 per cent., he could probably have arranged matters at an all-round reduction of 20 per cent. But Lord Clanricarde would not allow even 5 per cent., nor would he permit his agent to make individual abatements in cases where, as between man and man, he knew that they were needed. Time he would give them if they wanted it, but abatement, no, not a penny.

#### THE MEMORIAL TO THE MARQUIS.

Despairing of obtaining any favourable response from the agent, the Bishop of Clonfert, with the priest of the parish and the tenants more immediately under his control, sent a memorial direct to the Albany pleading with the Marquis for a temporary abatement to enable the peasantry to meet the pressure of the times. To that memorial, from that day to this, no reply, not even an acknowledgment on a post card, has been received. The Marquis of Clanricarde long ago quarrelled with Bishop Duggan, who complains of a breach of faith in the matter of a church site ; but it was a wanton aggravation of a difficult situation to offer a slight to the Coadjutor Bishop, Dr. Healy, whose sympathies are entirely with the landlords. The tenants refused to pay any rent unless they received 25 per cent. abatement. Mr. Joyce thereupon decided to proceed to extremities.

#### WOODFORD DEFIES THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

All this time, be it remembered, the tenants of Woodford were acting entirely without any incitement from the National League. The influence of the National League was in truth exerted in the opposite direction. The Home Rule Bill was then before Parliament, and it was deemed desirable to avoid any collision that might increase the difficulties of the Government. Deputations went up to Dublin to wait upon the executive of the National League to represent the urgent necessity there was for energetic action at Woodford. The National League, on its side, made not less urgent representations to the Woodford tenantry as to the grave impropriety of bringing matters to a crisis when the national interest demanded peace and quietness above all things. The Woodford tenantry waxed wroth, and said hard things of the National League, and I fear Mr. Tim Harrington, on his side, spoke with not less emphasis in return. The net result of it all was that the Woodford men were told that they would not get a penny support from the National League, and that if they went to war with Clanricarde they would have to do it at their own risk. Nothing daunted, the men of Woodford set to work to prepare for the coming storm. The National League being out of it, they formed themselves

into a Tenants' Defence Association, which included every tenant on the estate. They kept up the local branch of the National League, although for the present the fight was taken up by the more strictly local and tenants' association. I am particular in stating these details because they disprove the assertion so frequently made by ignorant outsiders, that the peasantry in these disputes are goaded on from the outside. At Woodford the truth lies exactly in the opposite direction. It was the local tenants who insisted on fighting, and the National League which did all in its power, and did it in order to induce them to avoid a pitched battle at an inconvenient season.

#### "TO STRIKE TERROR."

The application for a reduction of 25 per cent. was made last November, and had reference to the year's rent then falling due. There is a hanging gale of six months' rent, which is always in hand, but which no tenant is ever called on to pay until the termination of his tenancy. The Clanricarde tenantry in and about the parish of Woodford—Woodford itself belongs to the Burkes of Marble Hill—number 316. All of them offered to pay, less 25 per cent. None of them paid a penny when the demand was refused. After the dispute had gone on for about six months Mr. Joyce decided to bring matters to an issue. Of the 316 tenants thirty-eight owed more than £20, the rest averaged about £4 a year rent. Against the former he decided to proceed in the superior courts. Why? I asked one in authority. "To strike terror," said he ; "the costs are seven times as high and no time is allowed for redemption. Writs in the superior courts can only be taken out when £20 is owing. When the rent due falls below that sum the method is by ordinary ejectment process." "What is the difference in cost?" "£2 10s. for an ordinary ejectment, and there is six months allowed for redemption. The writ costs £17, and the landlord is placed in immediate possession."

At Woodford seventy-eight ejectment processes were taken out, but by some failure to comply with the formalities of service the whole of them were quashed, to the great delight of the tenants, who had thus made first score in the game. There remained the thirty-eight writs. When a writ has been obtained the next step is to sell the tenant's interest in his holding in public court in order to raise the money for which the writ has been granted. Ten of the thirty-eight writs were settled by agreement, the tenants paying their rents in full and costs besides, amounting to an average of 80 per cent. increase on the year's rent. The sales of tenants' interest proceeded in the case of the remaining writs. Where the interest was put up for sale, there was, of course, no bidder. No one would buy property which could only be realized by eviction. The tenants' interest in each case therefore was bought in by the landlord for a mere song. The amount mentioned to me was on an average of 50s. apiece for tenant right which in houses and on buildings alone averaged at least £200 per farm. Lord Clanricarde having thus secured the tenant right as well as the fee simple could enter into possession when he pleased. He has entered into possession of four. Sixteen tenants are living on sufferance, and may be evicted at any moment. But the story of the eviction of the first four is not calculated to encourage Lord Clanricarde to proceed to extremities with the rest.

#### MY VISIT TO WOODFORD.

In describing the evictions at Woodford I must premise that I was not present when they took place. But

I have taken the utmost pains to ascertain the exact facts. I have interviewed the sheriff who conducted the evictions, the agent by whose order they were undertaken, and the manager of the Property Defence Association who commanded the emergency men on the occasion. I have questioned several of the policemen and emergency men who took part in the siege. I went over the ground in company with the Catholic curate, Father Egan, who is the life and soul of the anti-Clanricarde campaign. I spent two nights in the house of Mr. Roche, the miller and poor-law guardian, who is one of the chiefs of the National League. I devoted hours to the discussion of the details of the question with the parish priest, Father Coen, and the leading members of his flock, and had the advantage of the independent comments of a journalist who described the evictions for the *Freeman's Journal*, and a neighbouring landlord whose hospitality I enjoyed the night before my visit to Woodford. As I also had the opportunity of interviewing the evicted tenants, I think I may fairly claim to have exhausted all the sources of information. There was only one other person who ought to have been seen, and that was Lord Clanricarde himself, but, as I have already explained, I failed to gain access to his mysterious presence. The episode was worth taking some pains to elucidate, for it supplies the key to much that is about to happen in Ireland. The actors in that tragic farce by Shannonside represent all the forces at work in Ireland, and it is worth while, before describing the evictions, to sketch in outline the men who took part in it.

#### A MODERN FRIAR TUCK.

In the centre of the scene stand the parish priest and his curate. In many parishes the P.P. and the C.C. are more or less in antagonism. At Woodford they are hand in glove. Father Coen, the parish priest of Woodford, is a type of priest almost unknown on this side of the water. He recalls reminiscences of Friar Tuck and of Henry Ward Beecher, but, more than either, of the jovial friar in the well-known oleograph who is revelling in the delight of a juicy oyster. A more genial host never cracked a bottle of champagne. It was a revelation to hear him lead off the chorus, "For he's a jolly good fellow," as the health of Mr. Dillon and his friends was drunk on Sunday night after the demonstration. Man and boy he has lived among the people of the district for the lifetime of a generation. He shares their hopes and their fears, rejoices in their success, and sympathizes to the full with their detestation of the Vampire-Invisible. He is their natural leader—first in Church, first in politics, first in peace at the festal board, and first in war at the agent's office or at the ~~at~~ demonstration, when the country folk gather in their thousands to declare war against the oppressor. I dined with him, together with Mr. Dillon and half-a-dozen more, and his table was a sight to see. Goose and duck, turkey and ham, a huge leg of mutton, and I know not what beside, all piping hot and admirably served. How his pretty nieces ever cooked them all over the peat fire in the kitchen is a mystery insoluble, but it was done. But the viands, excellent as they were, would have lost their flavour without the genial humour of our host, who not only made excellent jokes himself, but laughed with a jolly old-world laughter at the jokes of his guests. After dinner the good man toasted all his guests in turn, and we all had to speak in response. No better proof of the ease of his table can be given than the fact that the speeches cast no gloom over those who spoke or those who listened, although it went on for hours, diversified only by the alter-

nate singing of "He's a jolly good fellow" and "Auld Lang Syne," the latter the favourite of another good priest from Scarriff, whose Scotch dashed with Connaught brogue was delectable. Yet Father Coen is no mere humourist. No one is more attentive to sick calls, more diligent in ministration, more esteemed by his flock. In the middle of our high jinks the bell sounded for the Rosary, and it was with difficulty that he could be induced to allow a neighbouring curate to discharge the office while he dispensed the duties of hospitality to his guests. Although no teetotaller he has not a drunkard in his parish, and beneath the good-humoured, careless abandon of his manners you caught glimpses now and then of a sensitive and passionate heart. The evictions broke him down utterly, and it was with difficulty he restrained himself from sobbing like a child. The widow who voted for the Nationalist guardian told me she had given her vote to Father Coen—a phrase which lit up with a vivid little ray of light the extent to which priest and people, Church and National League, are one in Woodford.

#### A FIREBRAND CURATE.

Father Coen is president of the local branch of the National League. Father Egan is the secretary. Father Fahy, now serving his novitiate as a martyr in Galway gaol, is accepted popularly as a type of a patriot priest. Father Fahy, however, is but a very poor second fiddle to Father Egan, by whom he was converted but a few months ago from active hostility to the National League to a belief in all its ways. Father Egan is a young man, peasant born and peasant bred, with all the passion of a Southern and all the energy of youth. His brother, who is on the land, is even more impetuous than he, and I was told, I know not with what truth, that their family history had been embittered by an eviction which had deprived one of its members of reason. The curate is a fair type of "the firebrand priest," or of "a devil of a curate," from the landlord's point of view, or, as the other side would say, of the patriot priest and leader of the people. He is an effective speaker, with a knack of quoting poetry very effectively, and a taste for writing that finds vent in occasional lineage for the newspapers. Unless he is much maligned, it is his "delight on a shiny night at this season of the year" to shoulder a gun and levy tax and toll for the Church on the game on Clanricarde's preserves, for the spoiling of the Egyptians has ever been legitimate in the opinion of ecclesiastics, and if a young priest learned to shoot before he went to Maynooth why should he not keep his hand in when he is a popular C.C.? Rumour also credits Father Egan with the happy thought which led some forty or fifty of Woodford men to walk in extended line across the whole of Clanricarde's preserves on the 11th of August. They carried guns when they began their walk. They carried something else before they ended it. Hardly a bird or beast escaped the poachers' long array. Next day, when Mr. Joyce came to shoot over preserves in which he and his friends had killed nearly two hundred brace a day for four days last year, all that he had to show for a day's sport was a miserable bag of four brace. Father Egan is believed to be the driving force of this agitation in Woodford, and yet, as he said to me, "Although I get the credit of being so violent, I nearly always am found advocating the adoption of moderate counsels." Moderate or not moderate, his reputation will bring him to gaol before long, unless, of course, the triumph of the National League is even more speedy than its members venture to hope.

## CLANRICARDE'S VICEROY.

But now let us turn to the other side. Frank Joyce, the agent of the Clanricarde property—one of the Joyces of Galway—possesses the splendid physical development which characterizes the family. He is over six feet in height—an athlete every inch of him, a great walker, and a sure shot. When Mr. Blake, the former agent, was shot, considerable doubt was expressed as to whether Lord Clanricarde could replace him. Frank Joyce settled the question by accepting the office. He is in the prime of life—midway between thirty and forty—of a frank, fearless countenance—as pleasant a man as you would meet in the country side. He had agencies at Gort, in Clare, before he came to Galway, and he also had some considerable experience as farmer, having had at one time as much as 1,200 acres on his hands. He knows therefore as well as any man that high rent or low rent, with oats at 6*d.* per stone, pigs low, small mountainy cattle almost unsaleable, and hay hardly worth the cutting, it is necessary to grant reductions, but what can he do? Any man can manage an estate on reasonable principles: it needs a Frank Joyce to manage it on the principles laid down by Lord Clanricarde. He impressed me very favourably as a singularly frank, good-natured man, who bore no malice, and tried to do his duty as best he could, under very trying circumstances. But beneath the placid cheery exterior lurked the fierce temper of the Galway Joyces, and when challenged to fight there is no one who would kill or be killed with more recklessness than Frank Joyce of Tally-ho Hall. The tenantry have little to say against him personally. The priests say that he is an apostate, for although born a Catholic he is now a Protestant, and the tenants tell, with horror in their voices, how that on one occasion at Gort he turned process-server and served his own writs. If a Brahmin turned scavenger the descent would hardly be greater than for an agent to turn process-server, and I asked Mr. Joyce about it. He laughed as he replied: "Oh, that occurred in this way. I was agent for an estate at Gort which was in Chancery. The court ordered that processes should be issued against the tenants who would not pay their rent. It was in the middle of the Land League agitation, and the task was by no means popular. The bailiffs refused to serve the processes. One bolder than the rest who undertook to carry out the decree of the court was waylaid, beaten, compelled to swallow his processes, and nearly killed. I could not get another to take his place. The tenants, defiant and triumphant, considered that they had the game in their own hands. So I summoned them all to my office. They came readily enough. When they had all come in, I appealed to them to pay the rent. 'Devil a penny will we pay,' was the reply, and nothing else could I get. I then put my back against the door, and then and there served them each and all with processes in my own office. They were utterly taken aback, and made no attempt at resistance. The end of it was that I got the rent. That is the origin of that story." From which it may be seen that Clanricarde's agent is a man of resource, who is capable of putting a thing through when necessary with his own hands—just "the man for Galway" in the present troubled times. But Frank Joyce is not his own master. He is commanding in person where the battle is raging, but every strategic movement is dictated by the absent Invisible in Piccadilly, who knows nothing of his tenants, who refused to make even the most indispensable concessions until it was too late, and who comforts himself with the reflection that if Joyce goes the way of Blake he will still be

able to command the services of brave men who will sacrifice their lives in collecting his rents. I saw Mr. Joyce several times at Ballinasloe fair, at Athenry railway station, and at the Clanricarde rent office at Loughrea. And whenever you see Joyce you see his constables with loaded guns, ready to deal out sudden death to the wayside assassin. The strain on the nerves occasioned by this constant presence of an unseen murderer must be terrible. His young wife—he had but just returned from the honeymoon—shudders at the shadowing presence of the police. But what can be done? She married under notice, as the saying is, and better walk and ride and drive, ever under the muzzles of your protectors, than be left exposed to the peasant's blunderbuss which waits its opportunity. The mere inconvenience of the necessity of never moving without a bodyguard is almost inconceivable. It is as if you had a human tail heavy as that of the Syrian sheep, which require small go-carts to get them over the ground. Wherever you go two others must follow—two and sometimes four. When Mr. Joyce went out shooting last August 12 four constables tramped the moor and mountain all day at his heels, until they were ready to lie down worn out with sheer exhaustion, for Joyce has sinews of iron as well as nerves of steel, and it took some walking that day to bag the rare birds left after the tenants' battue. A brave, capable, kindly man, he could get along well enough if he had a free hand, but he is tied hand and foot by his master in London.

## THE EVICTOR-GENERAL-IN-ORDINARY.

So much for the agent. Now for the sub-sheriff. I first saw Mr. Redington sitting in his little office in the county buildings of Galway, surrounded by bills, notices, receipts, and all the paraphernalia of his office. I met him afterwards at the club, and heard from his own lips the story of his adventures during the evictions. Against him personally no one appears to entertain a grudge. He is an honest, straightforward land agent and public officer, who, being entrusted with a difficult and unpopular task, does his duty as best he can, but he does not hanker after a repetition of similar experiences. He represents the strong arm of the law. He is evictor-general-in-ordinary to the landlords of Galway, and in the first six months of this year executed 170 evictions in the county, and this was below the level of previous years. There is something English about his stolidity and stubborn determination. A clear-sighted man too he is in his way, but not I should say very far-sighted, content to do his duty from day to day without caring very much to inquire what it is likely to lead to to-morrow, although he is quite wide enough awake to see that the difficulty at Woodford may easily become insoluble if either side is unreasonable. The following letter from him to Mr. Joyce, dated Portumna Castle, August 23, while meditating the final assault upon Saunders Fort, is characteristic and interesting:—

My dear Joyce,—As I anticipated, Page (the bailiff) has funk'd it, and refused to show the holdings, so you must be here yourself to see that the boundaries are marked out. It would be too bad, after all our labour and expense, that a small hitch should arise to upset the coach. We would never get the large protection force again if such a thing occurred. So you ought to run no risk of such a contingency. Captain Hamilton has, of course, informed you of the things we have ordered, which will not be ready until Wednesday next. We purpose, accordingly, to assault the place on Thursday morning. I understand the ruffians have greatly increased the strength of the house; so it will take us all our time to succeed, and our appliances must be perfect. Captain Hamilton and you ought to see to this. I think it

would be most advisable for him to come down himself, for many reasons. First, these evictions are the most important that have yet been attempted. In fact, it is a fight between the National League and the Government. . . . Probably Captain Hamilton may think of some other implement to cope with these fellows, and if so he might send it down. You might ask him if a strong battering ram would be useful. My opinion is that we must conquer through the openings in the roof.

That is a faithful picture of a sub-sheriff in Ireland in the midst of an eviction in the year of grace 1886. He sees that he is in the middle of a stand-up fight between the National League and the Government, and in order to circumvent "the ruffians" he can think of nothing so effective as "a strong battering ram"! I pity the sorrows of an unfortunate sheriff if he is called upon to evict the whole of the Clanricarde tenantry. For he is no stony-hearted automaton capable of doing his evicting work without remorse. He subscribed a sovereign towards the costs of one of the tenants whom he had to evict, and he only quiets his conscience by insisting that it is all the fault of the National League, which has incited people to refuse to pay a rent which they could have paid without much difficulty. So he thinks; but it is not the case.

#### THE CAPTAIN OF THE EMERGENCY MEN.

After Mr. Joyce and the sheriffs the most important actor on the landlords' side was Captain Hamilton, the honorary director of the Property Defence Association, who supplied the emergency men who executed the orders of the sheriff. A capital fellow is Captain Hamilton—the Tim Harrington of the Landlords' League. If only he had a right of veto upon the acts of any landlord whose conduct he felt to be indefensible he might do much good in Ireland even yet. He is a British soldier every inch of him, calm, resolute, courageous, who is ready at a moment's notice to go anywhere with his emergency men, whom he selects, trains, and despatches to hold the fort wherever the landlord is willing to pay the necessary pound a week. In his office at Dublin hangs the great map of Ireland, all studded over with the little flags which mark the presence of an emergency garrison, and every morning brings him scores of letters from men eager and willing to take service for the coveted pound a week. Adequately supported, and with the necessary discretionary dispensing power, Captain Hamilton and his associates are as indispensable a factor in the evolution of the settlement of Ireland as Mr. Harrington and the National League. Without him and his men, landlords, with all the Government at their back, would be helpless. For constables will not hold evicted farms. They will protect caretakers placed in possession, but they cannot cultivate the boycotted fields. Hence the necessity for the emergency men, and Captain Hamilton does the best service of which he is capable in organizing the resources of the landlords for co-operation and self-defence. If he were but adequately supported, at this eleventh hour, he might save much from the wreck. Had he but been put in command in 1879 he might have prevented the wreck altogether. On the estates which he manages there has been no strike against cent. He is in touch with the tenants, he anticipates their legitimate demands, and, as a consequence, he gets on capitally with them. But he would not manage an estate where he had not a free hand, and therein he is right. The pity is that in the conduct of the Property Defence Association he is not equally free to refuse assistance in cases where he has ascertained after inquiry that the landlord was pressing a legal claim beyond the limits of equity and justice.

#### A TYPICAL P.L.G.

Prominent on the other side is Mr. Roche, the poor law guardian for Woodford, in the union of Loughrea. His mill stands at the foot of Woodford Hill. His house, surrounded by a pretty, old-fashioned garden, supplied me with a welcome shelter during the two nights I stayed at Woodford. Mr. Roche is one of the leading men in the parish, and he stood a near chance of being one of the eighty-five Parnellites in the House of Commons. In the board room he is said to be a good continuer; in private, I found him shrewd, practical, and matter of fact. Like almost every other Irishman I met, he had anecdotes to tell of vindictive rent-raising in his own family, and he had suffered in his own purse in the struggle with Sir Henry Burke, of Marble Hill. The Burke tenants of Woodford had struck for a reduction last November, and Mr. Roche had joined in the strike. As he was one of the most substantial of the strikers, he was selected as a fitting subject for ejectment. A writ was taken out against him, and it was about to be put in force, when at the last moment it was locally deemed inexpedient to add him to the number of the evicted, and he was directed to pay his rent, and costs. What costs mean, and what a powerful weapon of punishment they are in the hands of the landlord, may be gathered from Mr. Roche's little bill, which I copied in his dining-room:—

Rent due—two half years at £12 7s. 6d....	£24 15 0
Cost of writ, &c. ....	5 16 0
Warrant .....	£0 2 6
Mileage fees .....	1 5 0
Sheriff's poundage .....	1 10 6
Bailiff's fees.....	0 10 0
Printing, posting, and advertising sale .....	0 10 0
	—
	£34 9 0

As Mr. Roche had to take two journeys to Galway, this little adventure must have cost him at least £36—an addition of about 50 per cent. to his rent instead of a reduction of 25 per cent. The few, however, he reflects, must be ready to suffer if advantages have to be gained for the many; and, although he was badly hit, the end of it was that the Marble Hill tenantry got an all-round reduction of 15 per cent. Mr. Roche has a colleague quite as shrewd and well informed in Mr. Keary, the treasurer of the League, who entertained the speakers at his house on the day of the demonstration. He is the leading shopkeeper in the village, has an extensive business, and in sentiment is indistinguishable from a peasant. In an English provincial town he would be a leading member of the town council, chairman of the watch committee, and mayor in his turn. In Woodford he is treasurer of the National League. The only connection between him and the local government is that if the Tories try coercion the constables will probably convey him to Galway Gaol. In Ireland society is so organized that nearly all the people who in England would be usefully employed in carrying on the government of the country spend their lives in qualifying for the county gaol. In England they would run the machine. In Ireland they are run into prison. That is the difference between the two countries in a nutshell.

#### WOODFORD.

So much for the *dramatis personæ*: now for the scene in which the strange drama was performed. Woodford at one time lay in the midst of a great forest, which stretched from the town to the shores of the Shannon. Local tradition asserts that a squirrel in olden times could travel overhead across an unbroken bridge of

branches from Woodford Hill to the river. But of that forest primeval, in which once grew some of the finest oaks in Ireland, now remains no trace save here and here a miserable clump of trees, which the emergency men are felling for firewood. There is iron ore in the neighbourhood, and the iron-smelter is the devourer of a forest. All the oaks are gone, and where they stood here stretches a vast amphitheatre of slightly undulating land, over which are sprinkled at irregular intervals the cottages of the tenantry. Here and there there are great patches of bog, from the edges of which the turf is being cut away for fuel; while at considerable intervals you come upon enclosures ready for reclaiming. Woodford itself is one of the most English-looking villages in all Ireland. The Protestant church with its spire stands sentinel at the top of the hill, attended, alas! like many of the disestablished churches, by a congregation of two—a doctor and a road surveyor. From the church on the northern hill the village climbs down to the mill pond at the bottom, and then throws out a few straggling houses on the other side. There are of course the inevitable roofless cottages, without which no one could swear he was in Ireland, but most of the houses are stone-built and slated, neatly whitewashed, and apparently tenanted by the well-to-do. The post office with its telegraph wires stands on the left hand going down to the mill, the school on the right going up after crossing the millstream.

#### ITS ASSOCIATIONS.

Further up again stand the police huts, close to the place where Finlay, the process-server, had been murdered in broad daylight the first time he had ventured to stroll a few yards away from the protection of the police.\* Further up the hill again stands a Catholic chapel, amid surrounding trees, and then the road winds southward, unencumbered with other houses save an occasional roadside cottage. Woodford stands about twenty miles in a direct line from the nearest railway, about twelve miles by road from Loughrea, where stood the old castle of the Clanricardes, and nearly nine miles from Portumna, where Lord Clanricarde has a rent office and stables, now alike deserted. Twenty miles to the

\* Finlay was an old pensioner who had served in the Crimea. He was process-server and bailiff in the district, and his presence was necessary at the evictions pending on Sir Henry Burke's property. He was the only man acquainted with the holdings of the tenants who were to be evicted. The day before that fixed for the evictions, he was shot dead. No one was ever brought to justice for the murder. So intense was the local feeling against him that it was impossible to procure a coffin on the spot in which to bury him, and at first it seemed as if it would be difficult to secure him Christian burial. or that, however, I cannot vouch. The murder was enounced at the time both by the priest and the lay leaders of the local League, but no one was apprehended. In Woodford killing is regarded as no murder when bailiff is the victim or an agent. Of this what stronger evidence could be afforded than the extraordinary incident reported two months and more after Finlay's murder? "On Thursday, the 20th of May, a crowd of from five to eight hundred men assembled, and forming themselves into a funeral procession marched twice up and down the town, being preceded by a coffin draped in black, on one side of which was an inscription—'Down with Orangeism and Freemasonry,' and on the other—'Down with Landlordism.' They then proceeded to where the Property Defence and police huts had been erected, and within a few yards of the spot where Finlay had been murdered, set fire to and burned the coffin, amid the wildest and most enthusiastic cheering of the crowd, which by that time exceeded a thousand people."

north, almost in a direct line, stands Aughrim, where the last chance of James was staked and lost by St. Ruth, whose headless corpse was buried at Loughrea. From that fatal field there passed through Woodford many who fled for life from foes who gave no quarter. "The country for the distance of near four miles from Aughrim was white with the naked bodies of the slain. The plain looked like an immense pasture covered by flocks of sheep. Soon a multitude of dogs came to feast on the carnage. These beasts became so fierce and acquired such a taste for human flesh that it was long dangerous for men to travel that road otherwise than in companies." It is a place of gruesome reminiscences, and the map all around is flecked with the bloodstain of recent murders. The population of the parish of Woodford, which includes three electoral divisions and portions of three others,\* consists of about 600 families. Of these, their priest told me, only fifty ever taste butcher's meat more than once a year, and fifty more taste bacon. The remaining 500 live on bread and tea and stirabout for breakfast and supper; for dinner they have potatoes and milk. The pig they sell in order to pay their rent. They used to have a townland held in commonage, for which they paid £19 a year rent. It has been allotted among neighbouring tenants, with the net result of raising the rent from £19 to £50. There are many landlords in the parish,† but war is waged only against Clanricarde and Lewis. Sir Henry Burke has made his peace. There is a good deal of low land in the neighbourhood, marshy and liable to flooding. I crossed the country just after the rainstorm of October. Every watercourse was swollen, and the road was frequently submerged, so as to be impassable for foot passengers. Travellers at those places take to the fields. When on the summit of the hills a great panorama stretches from your feet to the distant hills of Tipperary and Clare. The silver Shannon winds through the plain, widening into a lake, haunted by clamorous wildfowl, which are frequently seen, with outstretched necks, flying over Woodford to the base of the hills. There are cattle in the stone-fenced fields, but few sheep, and only here and there a casual goat. Robins chirrup by the wayside and the inevitable sparrow, wagtails flit their tails by the mill pond's edge, and magpies are common. Hunting had not begun, but there were foxes enough, and so far there had been no boycotting of the hunt. Within a compass of a dozen miles there stood the residences of some half-dozen resident gentry, Lord Clanricarde, indeed, in those parts being the most conspicuous absentee.

#### THE HIGH DISPUTING PARTIES.

From November, 1885, till Midsummer, 1886, the struggle had gone on between Mr. Joyce and the tenants. As usual, when no communication was held other than that between the leaders of hostile armies, there seems to have been some misunderstanding. Lord Clanricarde does not seem to have been aware that the Woodford demand was reduced from fifty to twenty-five per cent. in order to meet the views of the Bishop of Clonfert, to whose memorial he did not even deign to reply. On the other hand the tenants certainly had no idea that Lord Clanricarde was willing to

\* In the union of Loughrea the whole of Woodford, portions of Ballanagar, and Loughatorick. In the union of Portumna, the whole of Drummond and Coore, and a portion of Abbeyvale.

† Namely, the Marquis of Clanricarde, Sir H. Burke, the trustees of the Westmeath family, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Exter, and Mr. Drew.

make any reduction whatever. The first that was ever heard of it was when Lord Clanricarde mentioned it in the *Times*—an argument, if one were wanted, in favour of refusing to evict a single tenant till the landlord is on the spot. Otherwise the evictions may be due to a vital misunderstanding that ten minutes' interview between landlord and tenant might have cleared up. Nothing is more strange to an outsider who visits Ireland for the first time than to find how wide is the chasm between landlord and tenant. Their mutual hostility is so great, they do not even take the trouble to keep themselves informed of the doings of their enemies, and a landlord will refuse to read the reports of speeches which are made on his own estate. Hence, at the rent office, as in the peasant's cottage, everything is seen through a distorted medium of more or less untrustworthy rumour. Sitting in his rent office at Loughrea, Mr. Joyce heard reports that the tenants were going to pay. Then, again, he heard that there had been another meeting and that they had decided to pay nothing. At last Father Coen himself appeared at the rent office and discussed the question of buying the land under Lord Ashbourne's Act. "How many years' purchase will you give?" said Mr. Joyce. "Ten," said the priest, "and devil a penny more is it that ye'll be getting from us." So that came to nothing. Then the decrees were obtained, and the tenants' interest sold and formally made over to the landlord.

#### DEFIANCE AND WAR.

Still he was loath to proceed to extremities. Accounts differ as to what took place in the rent office, but Mr. Joyce got the idea that the tenants, headed by their priests, dared him to evict them. His blood got up, and he determined to teach these gentry a lesson. He was quite convinced that if once they saw that he would not stick at evicting them, they would pay to a man. "They would have paid, if let alone." That is the fixed belief in every rent office in Ireland. And of course many did pay when the processes were taken out. Lord Clanricarde says that he has got a third of his rent, and on that point he probably can be trusted to know the fact. Some tenants came like Nicodemus by night, stealthily paying in secret, cursing the League the while. Others waited till the ejectment notices were served, saying in excuse for their delay that "we should have been shot had we paid before." Others came in and paid on the bench at Galway. But after all was said and done there were hundreds that did not pay, and it was determined to make examples of four of these, *pour encourager les autres*. Lord Clanricarde writes to the *Times* to say that these were hopeless defaulters.

This and other mistakes are only excusable on the ground that Lord Clanricarde knows nothing about his own property. There were not any better rent-payers on his estate than the doomed four. They had never failed before to meet their engagements with the utmost punctuality. Some of them had paid their gales regularly before Lord Clanricarde was born, and down to last year no complaint had been made against any of them on that score. They were selected, as is usually the case in such operations, not because they were the worst, but because they were the best. They had most to lose. Their eviction would hit them harder than the eviction of poorer men, and, therefore, would strike more terror into the tenant's heart. The old Roman lesson of the poppies is thoroughly appreciated by the Irish landlords.

#### AN EVICTION CAMPAIGN.

When Lord Clanricarde determined to make his

power felt, he selected as the victims the following four tenants:

Name.	Farm Occupied.	Acreage	Rent.	Value of Buildings, &c.
Pat Conroy.....	40 years	30	24	£200
Pat Fahey .....	4 generations	18	14	100
James Broderick	30 years	16	12	300
Thomas Saunders	17 years	34	14	200
		98	64	£800

They owed the year's rent up to November, and the hanging gale. Six months more rent had accrued in May, so that they owed altogether £128. £17 costs had been incurred in each case, so that the total claim against the four of them was £196—less than the value of the buildings on the holdings of either Conroy, Broderick, or Saunders. Supposing that they had been clearing out at their own wish, they could have sold the tenant right for at least a dozen years' purchase. Each of them had sunk much more capital on his holding than the value specified above. Their little holding was the bank of a lifetime, all their savings were stored in it, and now, by the automatic action of the law, it was all conveyed away to Lord Clanricarde in payment of a debt which, at the outside, did not equal one quarter of their section of the property involved, and they were to be turned out homeless beggars on the roadside. There is no need to use Mr. Gladstone's language about an eviction being a sentence of death in order to understand how tremendous a punishment was impending over the heads of these four families. For every 5s. which they owed 20s. was to be taken from them, which was the least of their troubles, but it was sore enough to bear. Small wonder is it that before the fatal day arrived there were symptoms of weakening on the part of some of the tenants. Broderick and Fahey went to the rent office together. Broderick, or Bruder, as he is always called, is an old man of seventy. He, and his father before him, had spent their lives in improving their bit of land, in draining and fencing it, and in enlarging the homestead, and in erecting fresh outbuildings. "Come, Bruder," said the agent, "it is a pity to see a man turned out of a nice little home like yours. I'll tell you what I'll do for you. Pay me one year's rent down and £2 10s. towards the expenses and I'll be content." It was a sore temptation. Old Broderick wavered. "I don't think you could do fairer than that," he said, and was actually feeling for his money, when Fahey, a younger man, who had less at stake, seized his arm and dragged him out of the office. The strike was for abatement, not for time. He never returned, and it was decided to proceed with the evictions.

#### THE FIVE DIFFICULTIES OF THE EVICTOR.

Mr. Joyce determined to act at the end of July. He ordered a supply of emergency men from Dublin to take care of the farms when the tenants were evicted, and asked the sheriff to execute the evictions. But here the first difficulty arose. The bailiffs of the sub-sheriff, knowing the character of the Woodford men, struck work. They flatly refused to act. This delayed the evictions for a fortnight. To overcome this obstacle, Mr. Joyce ordered a force of emergency bailiffs from Dublin. How many were sent I do not exactly know. A Woodford report gave the number at eighty; but that is, I should imagine, an exaggeration. The nearest railway station to Woodford is Birr or Parsonstown, a distance by road of twenty-five miles. The question of transport was difficulty No. 2. For there

were no cars or carts to be had for love or money in all the countryside. Whoever supplied the evictor with vehicle or animal was an enemy of the human race. It was, therefore, necessary to begin operations by sending by rail from Dublin to Birr sufficient cars and carts to convey the emergency men to the scene of action. A halt was made at Portumna, where the attacking party halted for the night, on the 18th of August. The evictions were fixed for the next day.

Difficulty No. 3, the prospect of opposition on the part of a hostile mob, had been foreseen and provided against. A force of 500 police, armed with sword-bayonets and rifles, was massed at Portumna in readiness to protect the evictors. It was with a smaller band that Pizarro undertook and accomplished the conquest of Peru. The constables were housed in a disused military barracks at Portumna, and the town was alive with jarvies and their horses preparing for the morrow's expedition. All that night, in the direction of Woodford, others were busy besides the constables. There was no commotion, no uproar, but steady continuous work all night along the road about half-way to Portumna. They were preparing difficulty No. 4. Next morning early the evicting party drove off in state toward the scene of action. There were four tenants to be dispossessed on Clanricarde's estate, and two on Mr. Lewis's. By the display of overpowering force it was hoped that the work would be accomplished with ease, and that before nightfall the hateful task would be accomplished, the tenants evicted, and the caretakers installed. With these hopes the sub-sheriff, Mr. Joyce, and the force of over 500 men were bowling along the level road towards Woodford, when suddenly the leading car came to a dead halt, necessitating a similar halt all along the line. What was the matter? The evictors had come upon difficulty No. 4, unforeseen and unexpected by any but those who had seen the working party busy the previous night. The peasants had blocked the road. Trees had been felled so that they lay with their branches across the Queen's highway, and wherever boulders had been found convenient, they were rolled into the road, forming a rough but effective barricade that rendered the road absolutely impassable for vehicles. There was nothing for it but to dismount and wend their way as best they could along the road. Meanwhile from every hillock in the neighbourhood their approach was signalled by eager scouts. The famous horns sounded lustily and long. The chapel bells rang tocsins of alarm, and soon every man, woman, and child for miles around hurried over field and dyke to Kilenemelley, where Pat Conroy was expecting the evictor.

#### PROTESTS VOCAL BUT INARTICULATE.

When the leading files of the evicting army neared the farm, "a cry that rent the firmament from all the crowd arose." Passions long cherished in brooding silence found vent in that prolonged and savage howl. And the strange thing about it was that it did not cease. Hour after hour all that livelong day that tempest of howls, and yells, and hisses was kept up without intermission. With us crowds yell themselves hoarse in a few minutes or half-hour at the most, and then are dumb. It was not so here. "I cannot understand how they did it," said Mr. Joyce to me, describing the scene long after in the quiet office at Loughrea, "but they did somehow. It never ceased all that day and the next. My head rang with it for three days after." "Hast thou noted," says Carlyle, "how omnipotent is the very sound of many men? How their shriek of indignation palsies the strong soul, their howl

of contumely withers with unfelt pangs? Great is the combined voice of men, the utterance of their instincts, which are truer than their thoughts; it is the greatest man encounters among the sounds and shadows that make up this World of Time. He who can resist that, has his footing somewhere beyond Time." De Launay could not do it, and so the Bastille fell. Our sub-sheriffs and Joyces are made of stolider stuff, and they press on imperturbably with their active force of emergency men from Cavan and elsewhere, covered by their protecting army of 500 constables. They make for Conroy's house, they reach it, and are confronted by difficulty No. 5.

#### THE ATTACK ON CONROY'S HOUSE.

Conroy's farm was the best of all the farms marked for eviction. It stands on the shore of the Shannon, and it is but a few yards from the door of his homestead to the marge of the great river. A vein of limestone crops up in the fields, and it alone can boast of natural grass. The house, shaded by trees, is large and airy, with comfortable outbuildings. Its late occupant had recently borrowed £70 from the Board of Works, in order to improve his holding. For the last forty years Mr. Conroy, who is seventy-six years of age, had lived here. His children had been born in the old homestead, they had played as children on the Shannon shore, and the little ones had grown up regarding the house as their heritage, the farm as the source of their livelihood and of their children after them. Everything on the farm in shape of fence, or dyke, or ditch, or road was their doing. The house and all its appurtenances was built from chimney to foundation-stone by them, and now—the sub-sheriff was at the door demanding surrender! It was refused. He at once ordered four emergency bailiffs to force an entrance. They advanced to the door, and thereupon difficulty No. 5 was developed. The door was barricaded, built up inside with a stone wall, and inside the house Conroy and his family and a posse of neighbours were prepared to resist to the last.

#### BOILING WATER A LEGITIMATE ARGUMENT.

An exultant roar burst from the crowd as the emergency men recoiled from the door and held a consultation with the sub-sheriff. Arming themselves with crowbars, they advanced to the attack. As they approached the corner of the house, the defenders flung boiling water upon them from the roof, while the crowd shrieked with ecstasy when a well-delivered volley scalded an assailant so as to compel him to drop his crowbar and retire. It is the law in Galway, so at least I was assured by all parties, that it is no breach of the peace to fling scalding water upon bailiffs engaged in an eviction. It is illegal to put lime into the water, but ordinary boiling water is regarded as among the legitimate means by which sheriffs' officers may be saluted at an eviction. At the Woodford evictions, however, lime was used freely.

#### READY TO KILL OR TO BE KILLED.

It is a marvel that nothing else was used. It had been openly declared that Joyce should never leave the place alive. Most people believed that he would not show face at a scene where the risk was so great. Those who thought so did not know Joyce. He was there, and he expected to be killed. But he was determined to pull it through, and if he fell he would not die unavenged. As I have before remarked, he is a splendid shot. He was accompanied on that day by a keeper from Portumna. Both carried repeating Winchesters. In case any shot was fired from the roof, both were

to fire instantly at the place from which the shot came; if one fell, the other had to act alone. As Joyce moved up and down the front of the house the magistrates gave him a wide berth. No one knew but that the bullet aimed at Joyce might strike those who were near him. Contrary to general expectation no shot was fired, not even a stone was thrown. Only the shrilly yell was kept up outside, and inside the besieged kept up their spirits and ladled out their boiling water as best they could. It must have been a strange sight under the trees that summer afternoon, for the sun had passed the meridian when the attack began, and the shadows were beginning to lengthen before the crowbar men made any impression on the house. Conroy had built it well, and his solid workmanship stood him in good stead. The priests were outside commanding the popular forces, the police stood motionless. Joyce moved to and fro, his hand upon his rifle. At last, four hours after the attack began, the corner of the wall yielded to the crowbar; a rush was made inside, and the garrison surrendered. Miss Conroy, a buxom sonsie girl in her teens, refused to leave, and was dragged out by main force, the excitement meanwhile being at fever heat. The eviction, however, was carried out. Conroy, his family, and all his belongings were turned out, and two emergency men, with a garrison of one sergeant and eight constables, were installed for the night. It was now getting dusk. Evictions can only be legally executed before sunset, and the expeditionary host had to retrace its steps to Portumna, having done only one-sixth of the work which it set out to accomplish. That night somebody, no one knows who, pulled down Monakeeby Bridge, which effectually barred the road four miles from Woodford.

#### THE EVICTION OF FAHEY.

Next day Mr. Joyce, the sub-sheriff, the emergency men, and the 700 constables returned from Portumna and began the eviction of Patrick Fahey. His house—a long, low, thatched cottage—is the worst of the four. It stands opposite another like itself, and is not so well supplied with outbuildings. Here the scene of the previous day was repeated. Lest I should be thought to exaggerate this is the narrative of Captain Hamilton himself:—

The same tactics were pursued by the tenants as on the former occasion, though the resistance was of a more determined and better organized description, the men in the house being armed with pointed sticks, iron hook drags, gaffs, and grape forks, acting under the instructions of leaders in the crowd outside, who directed them where the bailiffs were at work, continually assaulted them for over five hours, during which time they failed to effect an entrance, as the breaches they made in the walls were built up with stones from the inside. In the afternoon the sub-sheriff, who had continually urged the police authorities to support his men in their duty of enforcing the law, having handed in a written request requiring them to do so, they at last consented; at once the priest, who acted throughout the day for the defenders and the people, compromised the matter with the R.M. in charge, that if peaceable possession was given to the police those who had defended the house should neither be arrested nor prosecuted.\* Two men were placed in charge of the holding, with one sergeant and eight constables R.I.C. for their protection.

The emergency men, according to Captain Hamilton displayed the utmost courage. The Woodford men,

however, say they could have held the house against the louts from Cavan for ever, nor would they ever have surrendered but for the police, whose interference i loudly condemned as illegal. The theory of the localit is that the sheriff must execute the eviction; th police should merely prevent a breach of the peace. When the evictions began there was every dispositio on the part of the people to fraternize with the police. The watchword, says Captain Hamilton, was, "Spar the police, who did such good work for us at Belfast but give it to the Orangemen." The emergency men being mostly drawn from Cavan and the north, they ar easily confounded by the populace with the obnoxio Orangemen.

#### CAPTURE OF A GARRISON.

The second eviction had occupied the whole of the second day, and the whole force went back to Portumna. The third day was devoted to the attack on Broderick's house. This was the best of all the houses attacked. It was stone built and slated. It had originally been built by his father, but he had almost rebuilt it from the foundations, besides adding fresh outbuildings. There is a neatly laid out garden in front of the house and everything about the place denotes thrift. On arriving at the scene of action there was the same tumultuous outcry, the same fierce clamour, the same preparations for resistance. The sub-sheriff called Broderick to one side. "It is a shame," said he "for you to let yourself be put out of this. Why not pay your rent and avoid eviction?" He said that he had only six months' rent with him, and he could pay no more. The sub-sheriff consented to take that if he would pay the costs, £17. This Broderick absolutely refused to do. He could not pay it, he said: he had not the money. The sub-sheriff, anxious to avert the eviction, offered to raise a subscription to meet the costs. He gave £1. The magistrates each did the same. So did the district inspector. "Here," said the sub-sheriff "is £4 towards the costs. Cannot you do it now?" "It's no use," replied Broderick, sullenly: "I have not the money." The order was then given to storm the house. The emergency men forced in the windows, but could not enter, the garrison inside being armed with all kinds of weapons. The police thereupon were ordered to take it at the point of the bayonet, which they did, and twenty-seven men found in the house were arrested and marched off to Galway gaol. After the eviction was complete, Mr Roche went to the sub-sheriff and asked him if he would take the rent and the costs. "Too late," said that officer. "Lord Clanricarde is in possession. I have no power to give it up." He thought Mr. Roche was ready to pay the money. Mr. Roche assured me that he was only trying it on.

#### SAUNDERS, OF SAUNDERS'S FORT.

From Broderick's the evicting party went on to the house of Thomas Saunders. This they thought they might take before sundown. It proved the toughest nut to crack of all the four. Mr. Saunders is an Irishman who returned some seventeen years ago from Australia with a small fortune of £600. To this must be added a dower of £100 which came to him on his marriage. Looking about where to settle, he saw the farmstead which is now memorable as "Saunders's fort." He paid £100 for the tenant right, and gave another £50 as a douceur to expedite his entry into possession. On entry he spent £200 in buildings. His house is strongly built of stone, and its slated roof is much higher than usual in Irish farmsteads. A capacious barn, now used as a carpenter's shop by the emergency men, stands at right

\* An undertaking which at Woodford they declare was violated. Men are said to be in Galway gaol for defending this house; I have not, if only for the honour of the R.M.

angles at one end of the house. The farm is bad, marshy land. Saunders, who has always paid his rent hitherto with the utmost punctuality, has spent all his capital excepting that which he invested on his farm, and of that he has now been deprived.

When the sheriff summoned Saunders's fort to surrender, the garrison, twenty-four in number, laughed derisively. They had run up a green flag with the motto "God save Ireland" from a flagstaff on the chimney, and they saluted the emergency men with a shower of boiling water. The siege began and continued for some hours. The defenders here had some novel auxiliaries. They had taken some hives of bees into the house, and where the emergency men where thickest they flung a hive into their midst. The angry insects were no slight addition to the inconveniences of the assailants.

At last a triumphant cheer told that the attack had failed. Hitherto the evictors had carried one house each day. No house which they had assailed had been left unconquered. It had been slow work, but it had been sure. Now, however, the tide of success was stemmed. Saunders's fort barred the way. The discomfited sub-sheriff and his myrmidons returned to Portumna while still upon the topmost roof the banner of Ireland blew.

That night all hands were employed strengthening Saunders's fort. The doors and windows were built up inside so as to be impenetrable, fresh supplies of fuel and boiling water were laid on, and the besieged with beating hearts awaited the morrow. In the morning, Saturday, August 21, the sub-sheriff returned from Portumna with his small army, heralded by the wildest clamour that ever roused the echoes of Woodford. But Saunders's fort was impregnable. All day long beneath the green flag the garrison ladled water out upon the besiegers, splashing the lime-water over their clothes and into their eyes, and shrieking with contemptuous laughter as party after party retired discomfited. All that day it went on, and at last the sub-sheriff gave it up, and returned to Portumna in disgust.

#### VICTORY ! PRO TEM.

Woodford went beside itself for joy. Saunders's fort became famous. If they sang no Te Deum in the church next day it was not because they did not feel full of gratitude and pride. Four days they had kept the evictor in evicting three tenants, and on the fourth they had baffled his determined assaults. Even if Saunders's fort capitulated on Monday they had done enough to prove that they could consume all the 310 days of a sheriff's year in evicting the Woodford tenants alone, and that in presence of all Clanricarde's emergency men and 500 police.

Monday came, however, and the enemy did not reappear. There were policemen patrolling the road to Portumna, but no long line of cars came out from the east to renew the attack on Saunders's fort. Another difficulty had arisen. Page, the estate bailiff, not liking his task, had refused to show the holdings. Joyce must therefore be there in person to mark out the boundaries, otherwise all their labour would be thrown away. Their appliances also needed replenishing. Saunders's fort was proof against crowbars. There was talk of battering rams, and in the meanwhile scaling ladders were being got ready, and a shelter shed, after the fashion of the old Roman testudo, beneath which the crowbar brigade could work indifferent to the scalding shower from above. Nor was that the only cause for delay. The force of police had been seriously depleted. Twenty-nine constables were told off to protect the garrisons of the three evicted farms. At least as many had started for Galway with the twenty-seven prisoners captured in Fahey's cottage. The whole

of the road between Portumna and Woodford had to be patrolled night and day. It was necessary to call out the military. Two hundred redcoats were ordered to Portumna. All this meant delay. It was intended to resume the assault on Thursday, the 26th. Captain Hamilton arrived on Wednesday night with scaling ladders and other material of war, but the soldiers were late. It was not till Friday, one week after the first attack on Saunders's fort, that the authorities were in a position to renew the assault.

#### CAPTURED AT LAST.

The rest of the story Captain Hamilton can tell in his own words :—

Early on the morning of Friday, the 27th of August, the whole party, consisting of soldiers, police, sheriff, and bailiffs left Portumna for Saunders's holding, now known as Saunders's fort. A slight delay occurred at one of the bridges, which had been pulled down, but, having brought materials for the purpose, a temporary arrangement was soon made by the bailiffs sufficient to enable the cars and carts to proceed. On arriving at Saunders's fort, the crowd having been driven back by the soldiers, the sheriff again demanded possession, and being refused, the bailiffs were directed to force an entrance. The garrison, who had been informed of the preparations we had made, had also provided means, as they hoped, to prevent our success. On the men advancing, protected by a shelter-shed which they placed against the wall, those inside the house rolled large stones down on to it from the roof, which, however, failed in its object, as, expecting some such tactics on their part, the shed had been made strong enough to ensure the safety of those working under it, who would otherwise have been most certainly killed.

I had been previously instructed that our bailiffs were not to enter the fort, but only to make a show of attempting to do so, as it was arranged that the police should enter the place through the holes in the roof, and arrest the defenders for obstructing the sheriff. For some mysterious reason, however, it appeared to have been considered necessary that our men should be permitted to be assaulted and tortured for over two hours with stones, sticks, boathooks, gaffs, swarms of bees which were thrown from the roof, and such quantities of boiling water and lime that they were badly burned, and their clothes destroyed. These proceedings afforded much amusement to the crowd outside, men inside, soldiers, and police, with the exception of those who having been told off for the storming party knew that their turn was coming next.

At last the men would stand it no longer, and I informed one of the resident magistrates we would storm the place ourselves unless the police authorities would take some action in the matter. The police were then directed to advance, the ladders were run up, and in five minutes twenty-one men inside the house were arrested, the green flag pulled down, and Saunders's fort taken.

When the green flag, with "God save Ireland," was hauled down, a policeman hoisted another, amid cheers from the constables and a whirlwind of groans from the crowd. D. M. Byrne, of Athlone, however, had sufficient presence of mind to censure the policeman, and order the new flag to be instantly taken down. Nothing, he said, could tend more to a breach of the peace. The peace was not broken, however. Not even a stone was thrown at the soldiers and police \* who marched back to Portumna. The garrison of Saunders's fort was sent to join the garrison of Broderick's house in Galway gaol, where they lie to this hour waiting trial at Galway winter assizes.

Thus ended the famous evictions on the Clanricarde

\* The one exception being a little stone thrown by a little girl, which struck the district inspector, without, however, hurting him in the least.

estate in August of this year. There were four farmers to be evicted, the whole of whose rent for two years was not worth a quarter the cost of the cars used in conveying the police, emergency men, and soldiery. To evict these four tenants the whole available forces of the Crown in Galway were employed, first and last, from Thursday, the 19th of August, to Friday, the 27th. Seven hundred policemen and soldiers were employed in protecting the emergency men, and sixty peasants of the estate were marched off to Galway Gaol, there to be confirmed in their detestation of landlordism and of England, while their mothers and wives and sisters mourn sullenly for them at home. And over and above all this "Saunders's Fort" becomes a rallying cry and a watch-word for the Irish tenants all over the South and West.

As the only new points in the Unionist speeches related to the Plan of Campaign, the following account of the meeting at which that famous programme was first promulgated will be read with interest :—

#### AN IRISH COMMUNE.

The Woodford evictions being over—for the subsequent operations on the Lewis estate only occupied a single day, and, as all but one of these tenants came back as caretakers, there is no need to confuse the issue by mentioning them—the priests and the people held a large and enthusiastic meeting on Sunday afternoon near the church. The parish church stands outside the village, but it is the centre of the agrarian movement. Nothing interested me more in Ireland than the account given me of the way in which the whole male population of the parish administer justice and manage the affairs of the locality in public meeting held every Sunday at noon after mass. There is nothing like it outside the Russian Mir or a Swiss Gemeinde. As soon as mass is over, so I was told by a journalist who had been present at one of the parish meetings, all the men congregate outside the church. Then one citizen who plays the part of public prosecutor or devil's advocate announces that he has been told that Pat So-and-so has been guilty of the high crime and misdemeanour of supplying milk to a policeman—or some similar offence. The accused, who is usually present, indignantly denies the charge. Witnesses are summoned on either side, accused is confronted with accuser, and all the formalities of a public trial are gone through. Or the case heard may be one of land-grabbing or of some such offence against the interest of the common people. A lane is formed through the crowd : the accused passes down to the place where the public prosecutor stands. The evidence is heard by the whole assembly, and sentence is pronounced with practical unanimity. This unanimity also reminds me much of the Russian Mir. Boycotting is the usual penalty prescribed, and enforced without mentioning the word. Sometimes the proceedings are varied by the appearance of an offender who wishes to confess his sin and make his peace. His confession is usually accepted and the ban removed. The parish priest is seldom present. His curate is there, but takes no leading part in the proceedings. Any better training for self-government could hardly be imagined, and I sincerely trust that my mention of this interesting Irish commune may not lead to its summary suppression. As it has survived the Coercion Act and the Crimes Act, it will probably be hardy enough to defy the worst that Sir M. Hicks-Beach can devise against it. On the Sunday after the evictions, however, the usual court was superseded by a

demonstration, at which Father Coen was the chief speaker. His chief point was to demand the organization of a vast demonstration to be attended by the leaders of the Irish race, to express sympathy with the first victim of the campaign and secure for them some practical support. His hearers were of one mind with their pries and they set about organizing the famous demonstratio at which Mr. John Dillon and Mr. W. O'Brien first submitted to the Irish peasantry "the Plan of Campaign on which the land war is to be fought out this winter.

#### THE MASS MEETING AT WOODFORD.

That demonstration took place on Sunday, the 17th October, immediately after one of the heaviest storm of rain and wind that had ever swept over the wes It was the first mass meeting I attended in Ireland, an no one who saw such a sight for the first time coul help being impressed by it. There were between thre and four thousand men present, and some score wome and girls. There were a few banners and about ha a dozen brass bands. But that which gave the meetin, its distinctive appearance was the presence on its out skirts of a considerable number of mounted mer farmers and farmers' sons, who had ridden int the trysting-place on the sturdy animals which on week days were more at home in cart or at the plough than unde saddle. The scene from the improvised platform on th summit of the hill reminded me strongly of the gatherings of the yeomen of England in the stormy time tha preceded the revolt against the Stuarts. There were a order and a decorum in the crowd that helped the resemblance. There were the bold peasantry, their country pride, met in their thousands from the counties to wel come Mr. Dillon and to bid God-speed to the men of Woodford. There was no coarse jesting ; none of th brutality which in a London mob reminds you of the Yahoos. The only fault that could be found with th weather-worn, labour-stained assemblage was its mur derous undertone. "The real feeling of these me whom I have been addressing," said one of th speakers to me after the meeting was over, "is tha a little shooting would be far simpler. That is the old idea deeply rooted into their minds, and it is wit the utmost difficulty we can induce them to see tha agitation is preferable to assassination." That Sunday however, the best efforts were made to keep the shor and simple methods of the Ribandman in the background. The priest of the parish was in the chair, his curate wa one of the speakers. A neighbouring priest, who waxed eloquent in praise of Home Rule, threatened England with the ninety millions of Russians who "were already at the gates of India." How odd it seemed to hear th nonsense of the Jingoes repeated as if it were a fact in this remote Irish upland ! But I suppose that if Londo partisans persist in romancing, there is a possibility tha the men of Galway may mistake their inventions fo realities. Bishop Duggan gave the meeting his episcopa benediction, and sent them a cheque for £100 contributed by English sympathisers. As there are only four familie evicted, this single subscription would afford them subsistence for a year at 10s. a week per family. Their whol rent was only £62, so that Bishop Duggan's cheque wa 50 per cent. more than the tribute exacted by Lord Clan ricarde. Payment of full rents, said the Bishop, is admit tedly an impossibility for tenants in the unexampled depression now prevailing all over the country. Therefore he cordially united in deprecating "evictions for impossible rents, which can only end in reducing society to a state of anarchy." Thus blessed by the bishop, pre sided over by the priest, and addressed by the curate, th

Woodford meeting certainly illustrated in the most striking fashion that union between the Church and the people which is the mainstay of Irish Nationalism.

#### THE OMNIPRESENT CONSTABLE.

Before the speaking began attention was called to the presence of the police reporter, who took up his station in the crowd guarded by some dozen or score of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Mr. Dillon, Mr. Matthew Harris, and others wished that the reporter should be permitted to sit on the platform. Not so Mr. W. O'Brien and the men of Woodford. The police were hustled further away from the speakers, and at one time there seemed likelihood of a serious collision. Amid groaning and hustling the police were forced back steadily step by step to the outskirts of the crowd, and there seemed no saying how far the scrimmage would go, when suddenly there flashed before our eyes a vision of cold steel. The officer in charge had unsheathed his sword. The hustling ceased, and at a distance of about thirty-five heads in a straight line from the platform the reporters and their escort were permitted to stand. It was a disagreeable reminder of the risks of public speaking in Ireland, recalling to the minds of all present—if ever, indeed, it had been absent—that an Irish popular leader must always prepare to hear the echoes of his oratory after many days in the felon's dock. The marvel is not that Irish oratory is bitter. It flourishes under the shadow of the gaol, and even in the heat of his most fervent peroration the orator is conscious of the chill of the dungeon which ever waits to receive the bravest and best of the sons of Erin.

#### LEADERS OF THE IRISH RACE.—NO. I, MR. DILLON.

After this the meeting began by reading the Bishop's letter, and a characteristic epistle of the usual high-flown type from the imprisoned priest Father Fahy. Evict—I must coin the word—Saunders moved, and the Evict Broderick seconded six resolutions *en bloc* without a word of speech. Mr. Dillon every one knows—Mr. Dillon, of whom his colleagues say, in almost incredulous admiration, "he believes every word that he says." "A fine fellow is Dillon," said my Dublin jarvey; "one of the right sort he is. He would take to the pistol as soon as look at you, he would, and faith there's nothing left but that now." Friends and foes alike admit that among all the motley host that obeys Mr. Parnell there marches no follower more sincere, no patriot more disinterested than John Dillon. He shares with Michael Davitt the reputation of being the idealist of the National party. He has been in gaol—every man worth his salt in Ireland has been in gaol, except Lord Mayor Sullivan—and there is no one who stands better chance of going to gaol again than the member for Mayo. If the Government would but make him a first-class misdeemeanant, they might do worse things for the cause of liberty than send him to gaol again. For Mr. Dillon is subjecting his frail constitution to a dangerous strain this autumn. Agitating in Ireland is no holiday pastime. To be whirled across the country from one town to another in a first-class carriage is one thing; to drive ten, fifteen, twenty, and twenty-five miles in the rain outside an Irish car along muddy roads, is altogether another thing. It is the latter which falls to the lot of Mr. Dillon. Nor is it only the travelling. It is no easy thing to address five thousand persons in the open air for an hour at a time and then to spend all the rest of the twenty-four hours not given to sleep in discussing plans of campaign with local committees defending the policy

of the League, and making after-dinner speeches *ad lib.* That, however, is what Mr. Dillon has been doing for six weeks past, and if the Government lock him up they may save his life, and they will certainly strengthen his cause. When he stood forward to speak at Woodford, his fine melancholy features hardly showed even a responsive glow as a wild shrill cheer went up from the crowd. He had got a message to deliver, and he delivered it, not with great fire and fervour, but with that quiet ready earnestness of his which has occasionally compelled hostile majorities in the House of Commons to listen with respect to arguments which they despised and to facts which they ignored. Mr. Dillon's speech was not, to my thinking, a particularly judicious one. But it should not be forgotten that he was charged with a peculiarly delicate task. The National League had left Woodford in the lurch at a critical moment. Considerations of policy had led the Central Executive to counsel concession when the local branch had insisted upon fighting. There had been a temporary breach, and Mr. Dillon had come to heal it by accepting on the part of the League full responsibility for Woodford's action, and so to reassert the leadership of the Central Executive over its local branch. He had also to promulgate the new Plan of Campaign subsequently formulated in *United Ireland*, and so to proclaim a new land war at the very moment when all were prophesying peace. And lastly he had to dissuade the tenants from buying their holdings under Lord Ashbourne's Act. His speech was closely reasoned, vigorous, and full of points, but it was open to the criticism that it was unnecessarily provocative, and exposed the League to the unjust imputation of being anxious to stir up strife, instead of being, as it really is, a regulating and restraining force.

#### WHAT MR. DILLON SAID.

Mr. Dillon began by a eulogy of the services of the League. It had cut down rents by £500,000 a year; it had broken the back of landlordism, it had checked evictions by rendering it impossible to let an evicted farm. "I have the most absolute conviction that wherever in the neighbourhood there is an empty farm it is the greatest blessing that can be to the tenant farmers around;" and there is no doubt he was entirely right. The greatest curse of Ireland has been the insane eagerness of the peasants to get a bit of land at any price on any terms. This it was which really led to the banishment of political economy to Saturn. The interdict on evicted farms is bringing political economy back again, by checking the earth-hunger of the Celt, and so making land once more a commodity that can be dealt in on reasonable principles. Then Mr. Dillon went on to expound the two policies which the League recommended. The first was the policy of brave men who are ready to face suffering. That was the policy of paying the rent, less the reduction decided on, into the hands of trustees, and refusing to pay a penny until the full reduction has been accorded. The other policy was the old one of boycotting the land-grabber, so as to render it impossible for the landlord to let an evicted farm. Turning to the Clanricarde estate, Mr. Dillon with great vehemence condemned the demand for 25 per cent. reduction as "more than moderate." English farms were lying unlet. The farms in the Lothians had been reduced 40 to 60 per cent. Nay, the Land Court had just reduced several of Clanricarde's own rents 40 to 50 per cent. Why then ask for so paltry a reduction as 25 per cent.? His idea of a reasonable and fair reduction was from 50 to 60 per cent., sometimes more, sometimes less. "A reasonable reduction on some estates

would be to forgive a whole year's rent." As for purchase this was not a time to buy in a falling market. Don't be in a hurry. Don't be in a hurry to buy. Take advice, and seek wise counsel. Never buy when an ejectment has been served, or till the evicted tenants have been reinstated. There were no other purchasers in the market but themselves alone. Above all, let them keep up the agitation. When the agitation was strong prices went down, when it was weak they went up. Mr. Dillon concluded his speech with a powerful appeal to the tenantry to strike in the cause of their homes and their hearths, "to prevent the tribute of hard-earned money being sent across to the wretched man who lives in London and spends it in discounting bills." He was loudly cheered.

#### NO. 2.—MR. DAVID SHEEHY, M.P.

Then came Mr. David Sheehy, M.P. for East Galway, whose constituents now saw him for the first time. He is a worthy miller from the other side of the island, who was elected without a contest at the nomination of Mr. Parnell. He was introduced by the chairman as Mr. Parnell's nominee, and the good priest added that "any man whom Mr. Parnell sends to any constituency in Ireland ought to be accepted by the Irish people." At dinner afterwards some constituent ventured to remark that, considering they had elected him, they might fairly have hoped to have set eyes on him before this. Mr. Sheehy's reply was prompt and conclusive. "I am not a leader," he said. "I don't pretend to be a statesman. I am one of the rank and file. I would have come to address you during the election, but as the seat was safe I was ordered by Mr. Biggar to a neighbouring constituency to speak for the Nationalist candidate there. I obeyed orders and went. As I could not be in two places at one time I could not come here when I was sent there." A burst of applause interrupted his explanation. "Good boy." "That's right." "Say no more." "He obeyed orders," were audible in the tumult of approving voices—a gratifying illustration of the extent to which the Irish have learned to remedy their greatest national failing—a lack of cohesion and discipline. Mr. Sheehy's speech was unwise enough. "What might be a fair rent to pay?" he asked. A voice responded, "Nothing," followed by a burst of laughter and applause. "I like your music," said the worthy member, "and I hope that many will learn it. To pay the landlords almost anything was to strip themselves of their little means," and so forth. Boycotting was strongly insisted on. The trader who supplied the man who paid his rent when a struggle was in progress deserved never to receive another six pence of his debts. Never let them darken the doors of the publican favoured by the magistrates because he supplied the police. Do not forget the publicans who lost their licences for refusing to supply the police—a sore point in Woodford, where several cases of this kind have occurred. When Home Rule comes they say these martyred publicans are to be compensated for their fidelity to the people's cause. But there was to be no violence. The enemy of the people was to be left severely alone. "Despise him; do not waste your energies upon him"—a curious formula. In this way they would "smash down the English garrison," and so forth.

#### NO. 3.—MR. W. O'BRIEN, OF "UNITED IRELAND."

After Mr. Sheehy, Mr. W. O'Brien spoke, and made the oration of the day. "I never heard anything like that in my life before," said one of the peasants; "O'Brien is a ripper." The editor of *United Ireland* is one of those men who in revolutionary times seem

destined to the gallows. A reporter on the *Freeman*, he threw in his lot with the Land League, and was appointed to edit the organ of the party, *United Ireland*, much the most powerful newspaper in the country at this hour. I was surprised to hear that Mr. O'Brien was not originally a peasant. No man has more of that uncanny moroseness, that sullen suspicion which characterizes the Irish peasant than this journalist, who, however, is townsman born and bred. An extreme shortsightedness necessitates the use of spectacles, through which small, pale weak eyes peer discontentedly upon the outer world. The wrongs of his country have entered into his soul and soured it. No man writes in a more masterly style in all Ireland than this ex-reporter. He is a kind of Irish Cobbett with all the savage strength of his English prototype. He is in earnest, in black, bitter, bloody earnest. His private friends assure me that personally he is the most amiable of men, unselfish, disinterested, idealist to a fault, all of which I can well believe from what I have seen of him in public and in private. But none the less is he dangerous on that account—rather the more. Like Marat, whom Carlyle describes as "acrid and corrosive as the spirit of sloes and copperas," he does "not want sense, but with croaking gelid throat croaks out masses of the truth on several things." Nor is he without a perception of humour also, as if he too, like the editor of the *Friend of the People*, "were laughing a little far down in his inner man." Of which take the following as an example. Speaking at Portumna lately he was exhorting the tenants to crush Lord Clanricarde, when a hoarse voice cried out from the crowd: "Crush him to hell." "Nay," said Mr. O'Brien, "I think we may safely leave him to be dealt with on the other side of Jordan. Our business is to deal with him on this side. But I tell you that if this struggle were to last until—well, I was going to say the eventuality contemplated by that voice in the crowd will come to happen, but I will say until Lord Clanricarde goes to join his sainted father, in whatever region he now inhabits," &c., &c. Whereat the crowd laughed loud and long, although the jest was somewhat grim. The portraits of the "sainted father" have been pulled down in the Clanricarde cottages, and in their stead the tenants have posted up the cartoon representing the present Clanricarde as a tough and obstinate badger, who is being drawn from his hole as far as 20 per cent. by the combined persuasion of two hounds respectively labelled "English public opinion" and the "National League." These weekly pictorial cartoons of *United Ireland* and the *Freeman* line the walls of Irish cabins from Donegal to Kerry. For in this also Ireland resembles revolutionary France, and these weekly cartoons displayed in the window of every shop and placarded within every cabin, constitute the official "Journal-Affiche—Placard Journal," of the Revolutionary Government, "legible to him that has no halfpenny; in bright prismatic colours, calling the eye from afar." Only in Ireland all the placards are on one side, the I.L.P.U. not yet having risen to the height of a coloured cartoon. Mr. O'Brien is an effective speaker. Mr. Dillon is too reserved, too restrained for a mob. Mr. O'Brien revels in the tumult of a great crowd. At Woodford he spoke with immense force and effect. His words were rough, and his language was that of the barricades. Referring to Lord Randolph's declaration that if the Home Rule Bill passed Ulster would fight and Ulster would be right, he declared that if their homes were attacked by robbers Connaught would fight and Connaught would be right. He eulogized the resistance at Saunders's Fort. Wherever

an evictor like Clanricarde attempted to execute sentences of death upon his tenants, there let a Saunders Fort bar his way. The good landlords were giving reductions to their tenants, who could best afford to do without them. The bad landlords would give nothing. "You have no chance of a reduction unless you fight for it." And the battle was to be carried on without faltering. Public contempt should cling like a blight and a leprosy to every man who would take an evicted farm, and the evictor should never know a happy home or a pleasant night's rest until the evicted tenant was reinstated in his holding. And so it went on, until, after denouncing the 25 per cent. reduction as inadequate, he concluded, amid prolonged cheers, by promising not to fail them if they would but "unite in crushing this detestable tyrant."

#### NO. 4.—MR. MATTHEW HARRIS, M.P.

After Mr. W. O'Brien came an orator of another stamp—Mr. Matthew Harris, M.P.—the famous Matt Harris—at one time a slater—the landlords say a drunken slater—of Ballinasloe, now M.P. for the county of Galway, a leading light in the National party, who claims rightly or wrongly to be grandfather of the Land League. Mr. Michael Davitt was its father, but the idea was Mat Harris's—so at least I was told by an excellent authority, who shall be nameless. Mr. Harris is best known to fame outside Ireland by a certain memorable phrase which slipped unbeknown from his tongue, in which some allusion was made to landlords being shot down as if they were partridges. The spoken word comes not back, and Mr. Harris has in vain explained time and again that he uttered these words inadvertently, and recanted them voluntarily almost as soon as they were spoken. Twice over, he assured me, did he publicly, in the same district in which the unlucky words were spoken, confess that he had sinned, and roundly condemn the sentiment which had slipped inadvertently from his lips, and that not because there had been any outcry against him, but solely because his conscience reproved him. But it was all in vain. The story about the partridges is repeated whenever his name is mentioned. The fact of his double retraction and public apology is never mentioned. It is too bad. But such are the tricks which unkind fate is ever playing with the philosophers, of whom Mr. Matt Harris, of Ballinasloe, is among the chief.

#### A PATRIOT INDEED.

Of course Matt Harris has been in gaol. If the officials at the Castle are to be believed, he ought never to have come out, unless, of course, it were to be hanged. Mr. Forster used to show a map in which Mr. Matt Harris's tour round the country was marked by a blood-red cross, which showed the murder or the attempt to murder which followed the outpouring of his grisly eloquence. "His trail may be tracked in blood." "He has planned murders if he has not actually executed them." These and similar remarks follow the mention of his name in landlord circles. At all of which Matt smiles benignly, and comforts his conscience by reflecting that in his youth he did as much as any man to put down moonlighting, and that he took a leading share in organizing the League which taught the peasant to substitute boycotting for assassination, and agitation for the mutilation of cows. His views after a second glass of hot grog he imparts with a mellower eloquence than that which occasionally empties the House of Commons as he meanders along discoursing about things in general for an hour at a time, until

he is rudely caught up by one of "thim Rules" which were created for the botheration of the member for West Galway. As a platform orator, he is not quite in such excellent form as after dinner, but it was superb to note the critical—nay, judicial—manner in which he dissected the characters of the Clanricardes, past and present, a task which, indeed, he hesitated at undertaking before so virtuous a peasantry. Few Irishmen are neater at turning a compliment than Matt Harris, and very few have thought more deeply about the evils of their country than this Ballinasloe philosopher, who has a whole scheme of reform ready for immediate application. When Mr. Parnell is Prime Minister of Ireland, Matt Harris will lead the Opposition. He is getting up in years now, but his spirit is as youthful as ever, and his heart overflows with the milk of human kindness to all save the "exterminating landlords," whose misdeeds, he pathetically deplores, so often cause public opinion in Ireland to crystallize in the shape of a blunderbuss. He is a bit of a stoic also in his way. Ireland, he thinks, is never so healthy as when being coerced. A vigorous Coercion Act combs off the parasites who attach themselves to the national cause in the days of prosperity. He is a student of Spencer, as Mr. Auberon Herbert will be glad to hear, although I regret to add that it is apparently for the purpose of violating all the Spencerian principles; and, although a Catholic, there is no one more free to correct the errors of the clergy and denounce the shortcomings of the Church. His is a character well worth studying, for there is much more beneath Matt Harris's hat than he gains credit for.

There is a dry humour about Matt, which leads him to relish a joke even at his own expense. Some one was congratulating him on the elevated position which he had attained in becoming a member of the Imperial Parliament; "Not so elevated," said he, "as when I used to be earning my bread by slating roofs." A man of a severe logical mind, he has arrived at the conclusion that as all rent is an immoral tax, and landlordism, as an institution, is the curse of the country, the man who pays a moderate rent to a good landlord is a worse enemy of his species than the man who pays a rack rent to a bad landlord; because the former is helping to maintain the only part of the landlord system that has sufficient inherent virtue to survive. If all landlords were bad, landlordism would perish by its own absolute wickedness. It is the good landlord alone that renders the system possible. "The good landlord is a worse enemy to Irishmen than the bad," said Mr. Harris—a sentiment which no doubt seems absurd: but it is strictly on all fours with the condemnation which the more logical teetotalers pronounce upon the moderate drinkers. After Mr. Harris had spoken, the priest from Scariff, with his ninety millions of Russians, came to the front, and we had a parting stave from the curate Egan, who wound up with a militant piece of poetry, very effectively delivered.

#### A SUNDAY DINNER PARTY.

About this time the meeting, which had lasted for more than two hours on an autumnal afternoon, began to disperse. The crowd streamed back to the village, leaving the little clump of policemen alone on the site where the meeting had been held. Nothing could have been better than the behaviour of the constables; but that they should have been there at all is one of the disagreeable sides of the agitation in Ireland. In the evening we assembled around the hospitable board of Mr. Keary, the secretary of the local

league. It was a curious Sunday night experience. The parish priest sat in the chair, and about thirty others filled the room. There were three members of Parliament, two editors, and about three or four priests, while the rest of the company was made up of Leaguers from a distance. I was told: "You would not find another place in which national feeling is so pure and so strong as it is in this room in Woodford at this moment. It is the very heart and centre of Irish Nationalism." The evening was spent in drinking toasts, coupled with the names of the principal guests. We had long speeches from Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. Matthew Harris.

By a curious "bull" I had to return thanks for the Irish in England, although, as a representative of the base, bloody, and brutal Saxon, no person was less qualified for the task than myself. There was a very hearty good feeling. All present were of the same way of thinking, and a very natural way of thinking it seemed to be. They wanted to cut down Clanricarde's rents as low as possible, and to manage their own affairs in their own way. The distinctive note of the meeting, as of all Irish meetings, and that which distinguishes them from all English or Scotch gatherings of the same character, was the feeling of hopelessness which always supplies a sombre background to the utterances of the speakers. In England, a popular assembly, strong, numerous, and very representative, is always sure it is going to win. Here in Ireland, although the stars in their courses seem to be fighting in favour of the National party, there is no such confidence. They have been disappointed so often, as they have said bitterly, even when they seemed to be on the verge of victory, that they can hardly believe how near they are to the achievement of their longed-for triumph. The only point upon which a difference of opinion arose was as to the forward fighting programme which had been enunciated that day. I had ventured to suggest that a "give and take" policy of studied moderation would be more effective under the circumstances than the policy of war to the knife which was involved in the Plan of Campaign. To this, however, there was a satisfactory reply. "It is all very well," said my host, Mr. Roche, "to advocate a policy of 'give and take,' and that we would be very glad to adopt; but what are we to do when, as in the present case, it is all 'give' on our side and all 'take' on Clanricarde's? You may say that the demand of 25 per cent. was ample or was too much; but if we had demanded 10 per cent. we should still have been refused a farthing; and what are we to do when we are confronted by an absolute refusal on the part of a bad landlord to make the reduction which the good landlord makes of his own accord from a sense of justice?" As for any idea of inciting tenants generally to demand impossible reductions or to render a peaceful settlement impossible, that was disclaimed in the most emphatic terms. Nothing could exceed the hospitality which here as elsewhere in Ireland was shown to the stranger. I had intended driving back to Loughrea that night, but was easily prevailed upon to remain till morning to go over the evicted farms in company with Mr. Dillon.

#### AT THE SEAT OF WAR.

The morning after the great meeting at Woodford broke bright and blue after the storm, and was one of the finest days I enjoyed in Ireland. After breakfast an interesting discussion arose as to whether it was advisable or not to make the reinstatement of

evicted tenants a *sine quâ non* of peaceful settlement with the landlord. The pressure from the local league was strongly in favour of taking that line. Not a penny of rent to be paid until the "evicts" were reinstated was the motto of Woodford and the policy which they pressed upon Mr. Dillon with considerable force and earnestness. In this, as in almost every other practical question which I have seen debated between its representatives and the local branches, the central body was in favour of a more moderate policy. Mr. Dillon has, I see, since proclaimed the adoption of a modified version of the same policy; but at Woodford he argued strongly against taking the extreme step of making the payment of rent, no matter how reduced, depend upon the return of the "evicts" to their farmsteads. The middle course, which seemed to find favour with him, was to make the best terms for the tenants that were possible.

We drove first to the evicted houses on Lewis's property. The ground was poor and dirty, and one field was in a wretched condition. We found two only of the evicted tenants near their old homes. One had been readmitted as caretaker; the other was lingering near keeping watch over the outside of what had for many years been his home. After concluding our inspection of Lewis's farm and lunching at the priest's, we drove on to Saunders' Fort.

#### THE BRITISH OUTPOST AT SAUNDERS'S FORT.

Elsewhere in Ireland—at least in those portions of Ireland that I visited—there was at least an outward semblance of peace. Here the mask was thrown off. The moment we reached Saunders's Fort I felt I was in a theatre of war. This was the first of four little fortresses held by the foreign and hostile power in the midst of a subject but unsubdued population. The garrison, it is true, was small, the fort was a mere block house, smaller even than those by which the Turks used to keep their hold on the Christian peasants of the Herzegovina; but although everything was in miniature, everything was there. The garrison of Saunders's Fort consisted of two of the hated Orangemen, Protestants from Cavan, and four of the Royal Irish. They were all armed, and watch was kept night and day against surprise. The emergency men had revolvers, the police had loaded rifles, kept ready for instant use. Whenever one of the former crossed the threshold he was accompanied by a couple of constables, who never permitted him to stray a few paces beyond the muzzle of their guns. Each little fort is victualled by convoys of provisions periodically sent through the enemy's lines from the base of supplies in Parsonstown, where the railway ends. No British outpost in Afghanistan or in Burmah is more cut off from all communication with the natives than are these small garrisons. No one will give them so much as a drink of water for love or money. No one will sell them a pint of milk, a pound of beef, or even a penny paper. To give them the time of day is an offence; to enter into conversation with them is to render one's self suspect. So strongly was this felt that when we went the round of the farms even Mr. Dillon and his friends, who surely were beyond suspicion, would not exchange words with the emergency men. It was an effort even to say "Good day" to the police, although the police were by no means inclined to be unfriendly. As the only neutral present I went into each of the evicted houses and chatted with the garrisons.

#### THE EMERGENCY MEN AT CLOSE QUARTERS.

I must confess that I was not favourably impressed with the emergency men. They seemed to me somewhat

loutish corner boys, who undertook the work for cash down, and nothing more. They might do as caretakers, although they would not be too particular even if an evict's cattle did happen to stray over the old familiar fields—but as cultivators I would not like to say much for them. Cultivation, however, is out of the question while relations are as strained as at present. Captain Hamilton assures me that I was mistaken in my estimate of his Cavan heroes. They will go anywhere and do anything, and with two of them by his side he would walk fearless through a thousand hooting ruffians of the south and west. They did not let me see their best side, knowing that I was in evil company, and so forth. All of which may be true. But if it is they certainly disguised their better side very effectively from me and the silent Nationalists who accompanied me within the enemy's stronghold, and from expressions dropped by some of the constables I gathered that there was little love lost between the Royal Irish and the emergency men. The police were very civil. They made little secret of their dislike of the service. Outpost duty is seldom pleasant, and to spend your days and nights in dancing attendance on a couple of emergency men with whom you may not even be on speaking terms is not an ideal lot. So far as I gathered by my gossip with the constables, they are not ill-disposed to Home Rule, and by no means attracted towards the militant loyalism that reigns in Belfast. They showed me over the house, described the way in which it was captured, explained how the boiling water was ladled out through the roof, and pointed out where the crowbar had been at work. At Saunders's Fort one of the police was loud in his condemnation of the worthlessness of the land. No one could make a living out of it, he said, not if he had it for nothing. Such seems to have been Saunders's experience. In seventeen years, during which he had paid £210 rent, he had sunk £700, and is now heavily in debt. The emergency man to whom I spoke said he had a revolver but had never fired it, had had no practice, and I fear would not be of much use in a fight if it came to shooting. A pan full of potatoes was boiling on a great fire. In the barn the emergency joiner was busy at work, for the little garrisons have to be self-contained. No one will do a day's turn of work for them. Like colonists encamped in a hostile country, they have to do everything for themselves. Captain Hamilton in his report says that his association supplies two caretakers to each evicted farm, besides a carpenter to repair the houses, a smith with a travelling forge to shoe the horses of the association and assist boycotted farmers in the neighbourhood, and a man in charge of a light cart and horse for the purpose of supplying provisions for the men, which, owing to the severity with which boycotting is practised in the neighbourhood, had to be sent from Dublin to Parsonstown by rail, and conveyed by road, a distance of nearly twenty-five miles, from thence to Woodford.

#### WHAT LORD CLANRICARDE COSTS US.

The wages of the emergency man are £1 a week. They are paid by Lord Clanricarde. To garrison Saunders's Fort costs him, therefore, £100 a year, without including the proportion of the cost for smith, joiner, travelling van, &c. Saunders was perfectly willing to pay £11 4s. per annum for land the rent of which the Land Court would probably reduce to £10. The money already spent in dispossessing him would amount to a charge of £3 for ever upon the farm. But that is not

all. To protect the caretakers, who cost £2 a week, there are four constables, who cost £8 a week. The cost of the latter is borne by the nation. It seems rather hard that because Lord Clanricarde and one of his tenants cannot agree whether the rent of 34 acres should be £14 or £11 4s. the British taxpayer should be mulcted in a charge of £12 per annum for ever—for that is the interest on one year's cost of protecting the garrison of Saunders's Fort. That, however, is the way in which the ordinary law works in Ireland to-day. There is no reason why it should not be indefinitely repeated. There are 316 tenants on the Woodford estate. The net rental was stated to me at £800. The tenants want it reduced to £480. To enable Lord Clanricarde—not to collect the full rent, for that is impossible—but to banish from the land the tenants who will not pay him the full rent, he will have to spend more thousands than there are hundreds in dispute, and for every pound that he spends we can be compelled to spend £2.

#### "OLD BRODER."

From Saunders's Fort we went on to Pat Fahy's, and found his women folks installed in a smoky barn on the adjoining holding. Fahy's old house was held by the usual garrison—heavy-looking emergency men—fine, smart constables. From Fahy's we went to Broderick's. It was a snug holding, the buildings substantial, the garden neat and well tilled. The enemy was in possession, and outside greyhaired old Broder was hovering about his desolated homestead, brooding bitterly over his lot. I spoke to him in passing, but there was no brightness in his eye, not aught but sullen resentment in his voice. He and his father before him had built the house. Long years of loving labour had been bestowed upon the little holding. The savings of a lifetime were invested in it, and now—because he had asked for less reduction than the Land Commissioners had made in the Portumna farms—all was lost. No wonder the old man, who is nearing the grave, and whose hot youth was passed in times when Ribbonism was rife, wonders whether he did right in allowing his home to be broken into without shooting the first man who crossed his threshold. "Do you want to know what kind of man Broder is?" said one who knew him well. "He would have far rather shot the man who entered his house than that any of those who defended it should have gone to gaol on his account. He would have fired without scruple and been hanged without regret. That is the kind of men we have in Woodford." I should not wonder if the old fellow cherishes such regrets, as he lingers outside the old homestead and watches the emergency men go in and out, with the heart-sickening feelings of despair with which the old Jews saw the sow sacrificed in the Holy of Holies.

#### AT THE SEAT OF WAR.

Leaving Broderick's we drove on to Conroy's. Here were five constables, and half round the doorway was built a loopholed wall of stone. Here the emergency man could hardly be got to open his lips. He was a tall strapping fellow, but uncouth, and apparently determined to hold no dealings with the enemy or any one who came in the enemy's company. Some of the emergency garrison were out felling timber for firing; we passed their carts returning as we drove back to the priest's. It was a strange sight, a veritable convoy, preceded, accompanied, and followed by armed men, soldiers in all but name, with loaded guns ready to deal out sudden death at a moment's notice to any

assailant. The whole scene recalled reminiscences of Cooper's "Pathfinder" and the old Indian wars, when no man went abroad without his shooting-iron, and every tree was scrutinized as the possible ambush of a lurking foe. All was peaceful enough in outward seeming. The great blackberries hung in luscious clusters like grapes on the hedgerows. Cattle were grazing quietly in the fields; turkeys were stalking about the road; here and there a belated songster chirruped among the trees; overhead a few fleecy clouds flecked the blue of the autumn sky—all was apparently tranquil, but beneath the outward seeming the bitterest passions lay as ready to explode as the powder in the cartridge of the loaded rifle. "If you send any more of your redcoats here to carry out sentences of death on our poor people," I was told, "no power on earth will be able to prevent bloodshed. The priest alone restrained them before; the priest may not be able, or willing, to restrain them again."

#### ANOTHER DROP TO THE CUP OF VENGEANCE.

Conroy's son, they told me, after lingering a few days around the old homestead, had fled to America, fearing lest the ever-present sight of the wrong under which he was smarting might lead him to do some desperate deed. To the New World, therefore, he has carried the flaming resentment, the savage animosity which at home would have found vent in murder—a fire not divine but infernal, that will meet with only too much combustible matter in America. For we have sown the New World from end to end with men—founders of families and creators of new commonwealths—whose one overwhelming passion is hatred of the system which drove them from house and home to find beyond the Atlantic the shelter denied them here. The last memories of the old country which Conroy takes with him across the sea are those of his sister dragged out of the house in which she had been born by the soldier-police amid the shrill execrations of a whole countryside powerless to stay the hand of the evictor, powerful only to cry aloud to a pitying Heaven for vengeance on the oppressor. Conroy, it will be said, had only himself to blame. If he had paid his rent, he could have remained unmolested. But causes over which Conroy had no control rendered it impossible for him to pay his rent—general causes which have led English landlords everywhere to make reductions. Clanricarde refused, and Conroy has gone to add another drop to the cup of vengeance that is brewing for us across the sea. And let us not forget that although Conroy had the option of an impossible alternative, many a thousand of those who have preceded him across the Atlantic had not even that. They were evicted without scruple and

without cause, save that their landlord wanted to make room for sheep farm or cattle ranche.

#### A LAST LOOK AT WOODFORD.

Next morning early I left Woodford. The sun had not yet risen, there was a slight frost in the early morning air, and the grass and the shrubs were heavy with dew. My companion was not ready and I climbed the hill and looked once more over the estate. In the distance lay the leaden expanse of the Shannon not yet lit up by the rays of the sun, the promise of whose coming was already reddening the clouds on the distant horizon. In the village here and there were symptoms of returning life. A man rode his horse to water at the millpond. A few faint streaks of peat smoke began to curl from the chimneys. Now and again a door would open, and a girl would come out for a moment and then go back. Magpies flew backwards and forwards across the millpond; a crow would lazily sweep past high overhead. Far away in the plain stood the four forts, the advanced posts whose garrisons kept ceaseless watch night and day, never knowing how or where or when the foe would strike. Close beside me on the hill the ground was red last spring with the heart's blood of the process server; the bog in the distance may show the same fatal stain before another spring comes round. In score of these little homesteads scattered over the estate were wives and sweethearts and little children whose hearts were sad and sore because of their kinsfolk who are lying in Galway gaol untried, awaiting the Christmas assizes. Sixty of these prisoners of war are waiting there, bail being refused; in an hour they will be roused from sleep by the harsh clang of the prison bell, to begin again the weary round of a prisoner's day. Saunders and Fahy and old Broderick haply still sleep, dreaming that their troubles are all a dream to wake, alas! and discover they are all to sternly real, that they are homeless in their own land, that their heritage is in the hands of the foe. The sun climbs steadily on the dim cloud-line of the horizon, bringing with him as he comes a sense of injustice as universal as his light to all the tenants of Clanricarde's estate. But to Clanricarde he brings the right to another £70, the rent which his Galway estate yields him every working day in the livelong year. Already while waiting for my friend the fields around have produced for him a couple of pounds even at the reduced rate, and in return for this unfailing harvest of gold springing like some Pactolian fountain, from these broad lands redeemed from bog and mountain waste by the patient labour of his serfs, he does—what does he do? Except exacting his rents, nothing whatever.

#### THE "PLAN OF CAMPAIGN."

**A** PLACARD, entitled "A Memo for the Country," was issued as a special supplement to *United Ireland* of Saturday, November 20, 1886. It was distributed in sheaves throughout the country by the agency of the local branches of the National League, and is pasted up in cabins all over Ireland. The first draft of the "Plan of Campaign" appeared as an article in *United Ireland* of October 23. It had been expounded by Mr. Dillon at Woodford on October 17. On October 23 *United Ireland* published an interview

with Mr. Harrington approving of the scheme. On November 6 further explanations were published, but was not till November 14 that the scheme was first put into operation. On the 20th the plan was expounded in a special supplement which incorporated all the points of the preceding articles. Of this supplement the following is an exact reprint:—

FROM "UNITED IRELAND," NOV. 20, 1886.  
Except in a few districts of Ireland, evictions have no

been so numerous during the past two months as in the earlier portions of the year. This is simply the annual breathing time of the crowbar brigade. The "long vacation" in the Superior Courts has, however, now drawn to a close, and already the county courts have resumed their quarterly sittings. Ejectment processes have been issued wholesale, writs of the Superior Courts will soon follow, and again the fell work of destruction will proceed. Irish homes sanctified by many happy memories will be unroofed; Irish families will be scattered. One who has borne his part in the struggle of the past half dozen years, who has seen almost every phase of the agitation, thinks it his duty at the present critical moment to offer to the Irish tenantry and their friends the following suggestions as the result of his experience. Present rents, speaking roundly, are impossible. That the landlords will press for them let the rejection of Mr. Parnell's bill testify. A fight during the coming winter is therefore inevitable, and it behoves the Irish tenantry to fight with a skill begotten of experience. The first question they have to consider is—

#### HOW TO MEET THE NOVEMBER DEMAND.

In a few weeks at most the agents will issue invitations from the rent-office. There should not be an estate in Ireland where the tenants would not by that time have their minds fully made up as to the course they intend to pursue. To delay action until the gale-day means to go into the struggle handicapped. Should combinations be formed on the lines of branches of the National League or merely by estates? I say by estates decidedly. Let branches of the National League, if they will, take the initiative in getting the tenantry on each estate to meet one another. But it should be distinctly understood that the action or resolution of one estate was not to bind any other, and the tenantry on every estate should be free to decide upon their own course. When they are assembled together, if the priest be not with them, let them appoint an intelligent and sturdy member of their body as chairman, and after consulting decide by resolution on the amount of abatement they will demand.

A committee consisting, say, of six and the chairman should then be elected, to be called a Managing Committee, and to take charge of the half-year's rent of each tenant should the landlord refuse it.

Every one present should pledge himself (1) to abide by the decision of the majority; (2) to hold no communication with the landlord or any of his agents, except in presence of the body of the tenantry; (3) to accept no settlement for himself which is not given to every tenant on the estate.

*Should any tenants be exempted?* Question is likely to be raised as to large holders. It should be remembered, however, that the large tenant plays for high stakes, and there is no reason why he should not throw in his lot with the rest. Holders of town-parks who are shopkeepers have a stronger claim to exemption, for a judgment against them may mean ruin. But no case for exemption arises at this stage until it be known how the landlord will proceed. In any published report of the meeting the names of the committee should not be given.

On the gale-day the tenantry should proceed to the rent-office in a body. If the agent refuses to see them in a body they should on no account confer with him individually, but depute the chairman to act as their spokesman and acquaint him of the reduction which they require.

No offer to accept the rent "on account" should be agreed to. *Should the agent refuse*—then every tenant must hand to the Managing Committee the half-year's

rent which he tendered to the agent. To prevent any attempt at a garnishee this money should be deposited by the Managing Committee with some one reliable person whose name would not be known to any but the members of the committee. This may be called the Estate Fund, and it should be absolutely at the disposal of the Managing Committee for the purposes of the fight. Broken tenants who are unable to contribute the reduced half-year's rent should at least contribute the percentage demanded from the landlord—that is, the difference between the rent demanded and that which the tenantry offer to pay. A broken tenant is not likely to be among the first proceeded against, and no risk is incurred by the general body in taking him on on these terms. Thus practically a half-year's rent of the estate is put together to fight the landlord with. This is a fund which, if properly utilized, will reduce to reason any landlord in Ireland.

#### HOW SHOULD THE FUND BE EMPLOYED?

The answer to this question must to some extent depend upon the course the landlord will pursue; but in general I should say it must be devoted to the support of the tenants who are dispossessed either by sale or eviction.

It should be distributed by the committee to each evicted tenant in the proportion of his contribution to the fund.

A half-year's rent is supposed to maintain a tenant for a half-year, and based upon this calculation a tenant who funded say £50 would be entitled when evicted to receive £2 per week.

*But not one penny should go in law costs.* This should be made an absolute rule, for there is no principle in the whole agitation more grossly misunderstood. I have known combinations where the tenants agreed to pay the law costs for any man proceeded against, and all the while they never seemed to realize that it was the landlord's law costs they were paying, and that they were helping to defeat their cause rather than serving it. Incidents undoubtedly may arise in the course of the struggle where the expenditure of some small sum in legal defence would be judicious, such as defending a tenant who takes possession of his home. But these are exceptional cases, and can be easily provided for. The "law costs" which must be guarded against are the cost of attorney's letters, writs, and judgments incurred by the landlord. To pay these means to arm your enemy for the quarrel and furnish him with provisions to boot. In a determined fight there are no "law costs" on the side of the tenantry, and they should remain out for ever rather than pay those which the landlord incurs in fleecing them.

Grants and expenses should all come out of common fund. Every one settling before majority have agreed to accept settlement should forfeit his contribution. When the tenants decide upon settling, the balance in hand should be divided among them in proportion to the amount they funded.

#### THE ASSISTANCE OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

To inspire confidence among the tenants the National League should guarantee—

1st. That in the event of the trustee with whom the Estate Fund was lodged proving dishonest, the money would be made good to the tenants, and grants in proportion to their contributions given to them just as if their own fund had not disappeared.

2nd. That when the Estate Fund of the tenants has been expended, or so diminished as not to be able to meet the grants required, then the grants would be continued on the same scale by the National League.

3rd. That this grant would be continued as long as the struggle lasted and the majority of the tenants held out.

#### THE LANDLORD'S REMEDIES.

Before referring in detail to the different remedies open to the landlord, it is first necessary to caution the tenantry against some artifices to which it is not uncommon for the landlords to have recourse. Rumours are industriously sent round after the gale day that a certain proportion of the tenants have secretly paid their rent. Instances have occurred where bailiffs, by trying to get into conversation with some of the tenants at public places or making an ostentatious call at their houses, try to spread the belief that certain men are breaking away from the combination; and to push the deceit still farther, only every alternate tenant in a townland is sometimes served with the first attorney's letter. I need only mention that these artifices are practised to put tenants off their guard. So long as the main body—the majority in fact—of the tenants hold out they need give little heed to rumours about backsliding. Those who do backslide in such a case invariably come off the worst of the whole body.

#### EJECTMENT

is the most common of the landlord's remedies. The procedure, unfortunately, is too common to need much explanation. When a landlord intends to seize cattle or sell the interest in the holding the writ or process states that the plaintiff's claim is for £ s. d. (setting forth the amount of money due); when on the other hand the claim is for the recovery of possession, &c., then he is proceeding by *Ejectment*. In Ejectment the tenant is allowed six months after eviction to redeem, the landlord being bound to account for the crops, &c., if not left to the tenant.

Every legal and constitutional obstacle which could oppose or delay eviction should be had recourse to.

Every hour by which the sheriff is delayed in one eviction gives another brother-tenant so much more grace. There are only 310 days in the sheriff's year, and he must do all the evictions in a whole county within the time.

If, after eviction, a tenant is re-admitted as caretaker, he should go in, but *never* upon the understanding that he would care any other farm but his own.

Should the tenant not be re-admitted shelter must be procured for him immediately by the managing committee, and then if necessary a day appointed when all would assemble to build him a hut on some spot convenient to the farm where the landlord could not disturb him. Wooden huts such as those supplied by the Land League waste too much of the funds, and become valueless when the tenant is re-admitted.

Sometimes it happens that when a landlord evicts he burns or otherwise demolishes the home of the evicted family. Here the Managing Committee would do well to consider, if only little rent due, whether it would not be wise to redeem and take an action against the landlord to compel him to repair the injury.

Any labourer evicted in consequence of the strike should be carefully seen to by the committee and provided with suitable shelter and employment.

#### SALE.

This is the resort of the landlord when he proceeds by writ or process as an ordinary creditor. From eight to twelve days are allowed after service of the writ before judgment can be marked. The sheriff may seize cattle if he find them on the farm, or he may seize and sell the tenant's interest in the farm. A tenant who has his mind

made up for the fight will have his cattle turned into money before the judgment comes on. Every tenant who neglects to dispose of them is preparing himself to accept the landlord's terms, for he will not wish to see the emergency men profit by taking his cattle at some nominal price, and if he buys he is in reality handing the landlord the amount of his demand. Sale of a farm is not of so much consequence. Every farm sold in this manner during the agitation either has come or is bound to come back to its owner even on better terms than he first held it.

But if a man has a very valuable interest in his farm he can place it beyond the sheriff's power by mortgaging it to some one to whom he owes money. Mortgage effected thus for a *bonâ fide* debt or consideration bars the sheriff's power of conveyance.

At a sale, if the landlord or emergency men be represented, the cattle should not be allowed to go at a nominal sum. They should be run up to their price, and, if possible, left in the hands of emergency men at full price. It must be borne in mind that if the full price be not realized the sheriff could seize again for balance.

In bidding for a farm it should also be run to amount of debt, but by a man of straw, or some one who, if it were knocked down, would ask the sheriff for time to pay. By making the landlord's bidder run it up to the amount of debt and costs, and leaving it on his hands, the sheriff cannot follow the tenant further.

No auction fees should be allowed.

A farm held on a lease for a life or lives, any one of which is extant, cannot be sold by the sheriff.

After sale a tenant is still in possession of holding until a fresh writ is served and a judgment for title marked against him.

All this involves the landlord in fresh costs.

The eviction may then follow, and my observations in case of eviction or ejectment apply here.

#### DISTRESS,

another of the landlord's remedies, cannot be resorted to for more than one year's rent. Few landlords can have recourse to this without exposing themselves to actions. The chief points to attend to are:—That distress must be made by landlord or known agent, or bailiff authorized by warrant signed by the landlord or known agent; that particulars of distress be served; seizure on Sunday is unlawful; seizure before sunrise or after sunset is unlawful; or for any rent due more than one year. Distress is illegal if growing crops be seized; or the implements of a man's trade; and if other property be on farm to answer landlord's demand, it is illegal to seize beasts of the plough, sheep, or implements of husbandry necessary for the cultivation of the land. These points should be carefully watched when landlord has recourse to distress.

#### BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDINGS

are too costly a machinery for general use, and no landlord is likely to have recourse to them except in dealing with a holder of a town park, or some one who has an industry in addition to the farm in dispute. As I hinted already, such a tenant might be exempted by the general body from any action which involved the marking of judgment against him. But he should at least remain in the strike to the extent of leaving his money in the common fund until the struggle be over.

It is unnecessary to add that landlords and their partisans on the magisterial bench, and among the Crown officials, will do all in their power to twist the operation of the law so as to harass the tenants.

A tenant taking possession of his home to shelter hi

family from the severity of the winter is not likely to escape. A summons for trespass must be preceded by a warning to the tenant if he be found in possession. I have known a case where the father complied with this warning, and on the bailiff's next visit the mother only was found, and she complied. Next time the eldest daughter only was in possession, and so on through the length of a long family such as an evicted tenant nearly always has. A goodly time had been saved before the father's turn came again. He was fined and went to gaol. The prison then lost its terrors for him. When he came out he stuck boldly to his home, and he soon won the victory which rewards determination.

#### PUBLIC SYMPATHY.

The fullest publicity should be given to evictions, and every effort made to enlist public sympathy.

That the farms thus unjustly evicted will be left severally alone, and every one who aids the evictors shunned is scarcely necessary to say.

But the man who tries boycotting for a personal purpose is a worse enemy than the evicting landlord, and should be expelled from any branch of the League or combination of tenants.

It has often surprised me that tenants waste their energy in puny efforts to boycott a few bailiffs or emergency men.

On estates where some tenants have been unjustly evicted the others are paying their rents with punctuality, while they expect publicans and shopkeepers and others to boycott police or emergency men.

No landlord should get one penny rent anywhere or on any part of his estate, wherever situated, so long as he has one tenant unjustly evicted.

This policy strikes not only at the landlord, but the whole ungodly crew of agents, attorneys, and bum-bailiffs.

Tenants should be the first to show their sympathy with one another, and prompt publicity should be given to every eviction, that the tenants of the evictor wherever he holds property may show their sympathy.

Such a policy indicates a fight which has no half-heartedness about it, and it is the only fight which will win.

#### A Postscript to the Plan.

The author of the plan in *United Ireland* of December the 4th publishes some further "Observations," which, as constituting a practical postscript to the "Plan of Campaign," may be added here:—Local trustees should lose no time in following the course pursued in the case of the chief estates, under the direction of Mr. John Dillon and Mr. William O'Brien, by having the money sent safely beyond the reach of garnishee orders. It is extremely gratifying to learn how skilfully and how intelligently the suggestions which I have already made under this head have been acted upon. Though I have had occasion to make personal inquiry, I myself have found the most extreme difficulty in discovering the name of the trustee in any single case, and where I have succeeded in getting that much information I find that so well has the "Plan" been worked that the trustee is invariably a man against whom a garnishee judgment would have no more effect than a small pebble flung at the Rock of Cashel. This is a very wise precaution, for if the trustee were a man of substance, in proceedings for a garnishee were commenced against him, judgment might be marked, even if he had meanwhile passed the money to another

and the Court was satisfied that it was at his command. It is, therefore, the wiser and the safer plan to have the money in the possession of a person of assured honesty and integrity but whose position a garnishee judgment could not affect.

#### DILATORY MOTIONS.

Proceedings are now being entered on in one at least of the estates where the plan is in operation, and it is as well to remind those who direct the tenants in such cases that dilatory motions in court may be of the very utmost importance in prolonging this fight. Thus, for instance, suppose a writ is served now upon a tenant and he gets an appearance entered in court, a form for this purpose can be supplied him by any solicitor, and he need not expend a penny costs in entering the appearance. This will have the effect of throwing back the case probably until the next sitting of the courts in the middle of January. The tenant need not then enter court, and may allow judgment to be marked against him. Of course, costs will be given nominally against the tenant, but the landlord will eventually have to pay for the whole proceeding. This policy might even be extended to the extent of having notice of appeal served, and another fresh burden in the shape of costs heaped upon the landlord. In connection with this subject of costs, it would be well also to remind the estate committees and trustees in different parts of the country to explain clearly that there are

#### NO COSTS OF COLLECTION,

and no costs for clerkship or bookkeeping. All these expenses must be, and are, I am glad to learn, borne independently of the estate fund; and care should therefore be taken to explain that every penny contributed goes back to the tenants themselves for support, if it be not handed over to the landlord upon his giving a clear receipt to all the tenants for a half year. There are, therefore, no deductions of any kind to be made from the estate fund save those grants which from time to time will be made out of it for the support of the victims of the eviction on the estate.

This also brings me to another suggestion of importance in reference to the

#### VOTING OF THE GRANTS.

The committee should be careful to recommend to the trustee that grants be given in regular monthly parts. It would never do to recommend the tenant for a whole half-year's rent together out of the fund. In such a case there would always be the risk of a settlement.

#### CLEARING THE DECKS FOR ACTION.

Now that writs are being served on some of the estates, it is well again to impress upon the tenants that every man writted should get rid of his stock and everything seizable as speedily as possible. Of course, if it be writ of ejection that is served there is no need to dispose of the stock or crops until the eviction is at hand. But where an ordinary writ for debt is served the tenant should turn everything he has into money, and put himself in a position to carry on the fight. The man who allows judgment to be marked against him and retains stock enough on his farm or any of his farms to satisfy the landlord's demand, is not merely a fool so far as his own interests are concerned, but he supplies the enemy with funds to help him in the war. When a garrison which represents foreign domination is besieged in any country, no skilful general, or experienced soldier, or true

patriot will allow his cattle to stray within the walls of the besieged.

#### THE LEGALITY OF THE "PLAN."

In the same number of *United Ireland* which contained these observations there appeared a leader headed "Victory," of which the following is a reprint:—"In publishing the 'Plan of Campaign' we pledged ourselves that it would be found 'perfectly legal' as well as 'perfectly irresistible.' The latter point possibly remains yet to be proved; but, after the announcement we are able to make to-day the legality of the 'Plan of Campaign' is placed beyond dispute. We have it attested under the hand of the highest law-officer of the Crown in Ireland. According to our information Captain Plunkett consented to submit the representations of the Defence Union to the Attorney-General for his opinion. From a pigeon-hole not quite a thousand miles from Sir Redvers Buller's new stool in Dublin Castle we have managed to extract a copy of Attorney-General Holmes's reply, and here it is:—

"There is a mode by which the landlord might get hold of the money; which, of course, is not a matter for the Government; and I dare say the landlord will have good advice. I do not see how any action can be taken by the Executive.

"HUGH HOLMES,  
"Attorney-General."

The above minute was drafted upon the very day of the Privy Council meeting, to attend which the Lord Lieutenant delayed his departure from Ireland. It is, therefore, the accepted conclusion of the Irish Executive on the advice of its highest law officer. Its authority is, therefore, conclusive. The "Plan of Campaign" is pronounced, under the Attorney-General's sign manual, to be a perfectly lawful instrument. "The game is ours. The Attorney-General himself blesses the banners of our campaigners." So far *United Ireland*. The Attorney-General subsequently in the Court of Queen's Bench has distinctly denied that the plan is legal.

#### THE PLAN IN OPERATION.

The following descriptions of "Nationalist rent days" will enable any one to understand how the plan works in practice, so far at least as the collecting of the money goes. The first taken from the *Freeman's Journal* describes the scene witnessed on Lord De Freyne's property in county Sligo. This nobleman is a comparatively small landowner. He possesses 4,052 acres in Sligo, the Poor Law valuation of which is £1,488. Last year he granted an abatement of 15 per cent. This year, although prices are lower, he refused to grant any abatement at all. The tenants asked for an abatement of 20 per cent, and being refused decided to adopt the Plan of Campaign. This is what followed. The quotation is from the *Freeman's Journal* of December 3.—

#### COLLECTING LORD DE FREYNE'S RENTS.

There is nothing in the nature of a town or even a village at Killree Junction, there being only two or three one-story thatched cottages within sight of it. In one of these, the nearest to the station, the rents were received by Mr. William Redmond, M.P.; the Rev. Canon O'Donoghue, P.P.; Rev. Father Henry, C.C.; and the Rev. Father Filan, C.C. The operations of receiving the rents, entering the amounts, and giving receipts to the tenants occupied the greater part of the day, commencing in early morning and continuing far into the afternoon. Although the situation was rather a depressing one for the poor people exposed to all the severity of the elements, they seemed

to be one and all animated by the greatest enthusiasm. The interior of the cottage in which the rents were being collected presented a spectacle really unique in its way. The first room—a sort of combination of kitchen, sitting-room, and shop—was crowded almost to suffocation by men and a few women, who were sheltering from the snow which fell in great white flakes without. There was no grate, but a few turf sods burned on the hearth, while above them hung a kettle, suspended from an iron hook fixed from the quaint old chimney. In the centre of the bedroom leading off the apartment was a small table, at which Mr. Redmond, M.P., the clergymen whose names are given above, and one of the leading members of the local branch of the National League were seated receiving the tenants' rents. The room was densely crowded, but the utmost order and decorum prevailed, and the whole proceedings were conducted in the most punctilious and business-like manner. The tenant handed the money to one of the gentlemen at the table, his name was duly entered with the amount paid by him into a book, and he was handed back a printed receipt for the amount which he had lodged. As the day wore on the pile of bank notes upon the table mounted higher and higher, and the rows of glistening sovereigns grew longer and longer, until they stretched across the table like streams of yellow ore. It was difficult to realize how these bleak western plains had ever produced so much money, and the conviction seemed to force itself upon the mind that a considerable part of it had either been earned by work across the Channel or in remittances from friends and relatives on the other side of the broad Atlantic.

"Father," exclaimed one of the younger men, pushing excitedly his aged parent into the room where the rents were being paid over, "come along; you have lived to strike a blow for freedom and for Ireland." The words were uttered with earnestness and enthusiasm. There are upwards of 300 tenants upon this estate alone who have adopted the "plan," and a further sitting will be necessary in order to receive the remaining lodgment. A couple of policemen, who looked chilled and spiritless walked about the platform, but made no attempt to interfere with the proceedings.

#### COLLECTING MR. MURPHY'S RENT.

That is one picture drawn by an Irishman. Here is its companion from an English pencil. I quote from the special correspondence of the *Daily News*, Dec. 7. The scene is laid an hour and a half's drive from Castlerea, on the estate of Mr. John Murphy, who lives in Kildare:—

The scene of the Nationalist rent collection was an old thatched building, like two or three of the ordinary cabins of the country thrown into one, and was called by the villagers the old schoolhouse. By the side of a great peat fire Mr. W. Redmond, M.P., and Mr. Fitzgibbon, draper, of Castlerea, were sitting at the receipt of custom. A pile of bank notes was on the table before them; golden sovereigns and silver pieces of every denomination were also lying about in notable quantity the crowd looking on with eagerness at the growing pile. The people were unmistakably paying rent, and not to Mr. Murphy or his agent, but to Mr. W. Redmond, M.P. The mere promulgation of the "plan" at a public meeting was not nearly so impressive as the naked reality. The poor people came crowding nervously up to the table all anxiety to have their business disposed of. They were the class of people familiar to us in England as the harvest labourer. They brought out their bags, purses, or paper rolls from the depths of their pocket with trembling hands. The scene was so pathetic as to be unbearable upon any suspicion that the

people were not free agents. People in some cases were plaintively apologizing for not bringing more, and were proffering their mites with the assurance that they would pay the rest, with God's help, when they got a little time.

A tenant whose half-year's rent, after 30 per cent. reduction, was 16s. 10d., paid his money. What is going to be done with this money supposing Murphy or Mr. Lynch would not give the reduction he was asked? "My idea, sorr," answered the man, "is that in case he does not take it, it will be in fund that will relieve those that he will evict out of their homes." Mary Corrigan, of Creevee, responded in a doubtful way to similar inquiries put to her. She vaguely replied that she was paying the money "to support us, sorr." But her son came forward to answer more clearly for the poor woman, and showed that he was quite aware of the nature of the transaction. One woman paid only 10s. on account. She explained that even that sum she had borrowed from Father Martin, "for fear people would say I would not come in." She was asked to explain this expression. Did she not come because she thought it right? "I was afraid that I would be put to any cost." "And you wanted to get protection like the rest?" "Yes, sorr. I was afraid of Whitby Lynch," the agent. "You were not of your neighbours?" asked Mr. Fitzgibbon. "Faith, that's throue, yer honour." There were some men who spoke bitter things out of a sore heart, and gave thanks to God that they were not paying their rent in the ordinary way. Pat Raferty, an evicted tenant, acting as caretaker, who had hereditary sorrows to relate, paid only one half-sovereign on account. He spoke fluently, and at the end of a long narrative of his own grievances and those of his family in former times said, "If I can possibly find money anywhere either to borrow or by paying interest of 5s. in the pound for it, I will try, your honour; and for the cause of Ireland I am willing to go on the gallows in order to put down tyranny." It was a complaint of many of the tenants that their property had been revalued on their own improvement of bog land, which is plentiful in this locality. They declared the absolute inability of the land to bear the rent, and when questioned about the money they brought owned their acknowledgment to friends in America or to their own labour in England. Out of 180 tenants on Mr. Murphy's estate 164 paid rents, or instalments of rents with promises of more, to Mr. Redmond to-day and to one of his assistants, who had to open a second office to relieve the pressure upon him. Mr. Crilly was engaged elsewhere receiving rents belonging to Lord Dillon. The only receipt given to the tenant is a memorandum containing his name, the amount of his rent, and the amount of contribution handed to the receivers. At the close of the collection an enthusiastic meeting of the peasantry was held in one of the village fields. Father Hopkins came from another village at the request of his parishioners to ask that an office should be opened for them. Another rent collection takes place in a village ten miles from here to-morrow. The hands of the amateur rent collectors are indeed full for the week, and if on other estates the tenants come forward as they have done on Lord De Freyne's, Lord Dillon's, and Mr. Murphy's, it is possible that the daring "Plan of Campaign" will have forced the land question on for immediate settlement.

#### TO WHAT WILL THIS THING GROW?

Addressing the Ponsonby tenants in county Cork on December 5, Mr. W. O'Brien wound up a spirited speech by the following description of the triumph in store for

the Plan of Campaign:—We have not entered into this fight without being prepared to go through it to the end—ay, to the death. (Cheers.) We have put our hands to the plough, and, with God's blessing, if this struggle were to last for years and years we will never turn back, and you shall never be struck down, and you shall never be deserted as long as there is a pound in the exchequer of the National League, or as long as there is a dollar in the pockets of Father Hayes's friends in Irish America. (Cheers.) You shall never be deserted in this fight until victory shine upon your banners and this millstone of rack rents be struck from your necks for evermore. We are only in the infancy of this movement, but it is rather a promising child. (Laughter.) This movement is already an infant Hercules. I can tell the landlords, we did not desire, and we do not desire now, that the Plan of Campaign should be adopted anywhere except where the tenants have a just and moderate and an unimpeachable case, as you have here. We do not desire that it should be used recklessly. We believe we have discovered a weapon against landlordism, the mere threat and terror of which have already brought dozens of rack-renters to their knees. (Cheers.) We know we have discovered a weapon which feudal landlordism can no more resist than a suit of armour of the Middle Ages can resist modern artillery. We do not desire to make anything but a just and moderate and sparing use of this great weapon. The landlords have even yet an opportunity of confining this movement within reasonable limits, but I tell them here to-day that they will want to hurry up with their abatements if they do not want to have this movement spread like a forest fire from end to end of the island. The heather is already on fire. I never in all my life witnessed such extraordinary enthusiasm as I have seen throughout the West of Ireland in this movement. There is nothing in all my life that has touched me more than the way in which those thousands of poor Western farmers scraped together the amount of their deposits, many of them to my own knowledge by begging and by borrowing it, and the absolute and unquestioning confidence with which they handed over their little store to a man like myself, a stranger to them, whose worldly goods are all comprised in two portmanteaus. (Laughter.) I know of no honour that the Queen or that the Parliament could pay me that I would prize half so highly as I prize this simple note of confidence from the heart of my poor countrymen of the West. (Cheers.) The men who revile us in the London press and attack us (groans for "The rags")—they little know you and they little know us. They little know that in the holy and ennobling cause in which we are engaged, you—the Irish people—would trust us with the last shilling in your purse, and with the last drop of blood in your bodies if necessary. (Cheers.) Yes, you would do it, and I know it—(renewed cheers)—and you know, without my telling you, that we would suffer our right arms to wither off in the fire rather than betray that trust and confidence of yours No; together we have struggled in this cause; in sunshine and in storm together. Please God, we will march on shoulder to shoulder, from victory to victory, until we shall have liberated this land from the two curses of landlordism and English rule, which have darkened and blighted the lives of our people, and which have brought misery and decay upon a land which the almighty hand of God designed to be a land of happiness and of plenty and of freedom. (Prolonged cheers.)

#### A CRITICISM OF THE PLAN.

When the Plan of Campaign had only been adopted on a very few estates our Commissioner published a

criticism of the plan which embodied the views of several of the leading politicians and officials in Ireland. Events have since then led to a modification of this judgment on some points, but as illustrating the mental attitude of the general public in Ireland towards the plan at its inception it is worth reproducing here:—

I was present at the Woodford demonstration when the Plan of Campaign was first unfolded to the world, and I have watched with considerable interest the success of the efforts to induce the tenants to adopt the programme. The Plan of Campaign is very taking in its simplicity. Its essence consists in the proposal that whenever a landlord refuses to settle at the abatement proposed by his tenants the latter shall pay their rent minus the stipulated abatements into the hands of an anonymous trustee, who will hold it in trust for the payment of what in industrial disputes would be described as strike allowances to the hands who are out. In other words, the reduced rent of all the tenantry is to be banked with an unknown individual, who is to act as paymaster and dole out weekly allowances to such of the tenants as are evicted by the landlord for non-payment of rent. By this means war will be made to maintain war, and the struggle against the landlord will be maintained at the landlord's own expense. Furthermore, the scheme provided for the first time an absolutely certain check upon blacklegging. Hitherto strikes against payment of rent have broken down because some of the tenants, failing to maintain a firm front, have gone behind back and paid the rent to the agent. The Irish peasant distrusts everybody, his neighbour most of all; and he is never sure that the very orators at the local League may not be making their peace unbeknown to their deluded followers.\*

If the rent minus the abatement is all lodged in the hands of the trustee, it cannot be paid to the landlord. The security against blacklegging is therefore perfect, and on paper it appears to be an excellent Plan of Campaign. The objections to it are, however, very serious. The first step in the campaign is for the tenants on each estate to elect a managing committee of six and a chairman, or seven in all, to take charge of the rent. These seven will be well known to every tenant on the estate; nor will any attempt be made to keep it secret. To them the rent is paid, and by them it is handed over to "some reliable person whose name should not be known to any but the members of the committee." But it would be known to seven Irishmen, who will be in constant communication with the trustee, paying him money in the first instance and drawing upon him for money all the winter through. It may be that these seven Irishmen and their trustee will all keep the secret so closely that no emissary of the enemy can gain a clue as to the identity of the keeper of the money, but the chances are enormously against it. To begin with, the Irishman is not a secretive animal, if by that is meant

\* Not altogether without cause, as the following little anecdote will show: A landlord who owns 14,000 acres in the south of Ireland was surprised the other evening while walking in his park by the sudden apparition of one of his tenants, who was the leading spirit in the local National League. The landlord drew himself together, half-fearing that he was to be attacked, when, to his surprise, he was addressed with a peremptory command, "Put your hand in me pocket." He hesitated. The mandate was repeated, "Put your hand in me pocket." Seeing that the man was alone, and reflecting that physically he was a better man than the Nationalist, he consented. Thrusting his hand into his tenant's pocket he pulled out a roll of bank notes. "Divil a penny of rent it is that you can ever say I paid you," said the man, as he vanished behind the trees; but the bank notes exactly equalled the rent that was due.

an animal given to the keeping of secrets. Sooner or later some one is sure either to blab or to raise suspicion by unguarded words or actions which will lead the authorities to identify the treasurer of the estate fund. An Irishman's head is leaky at the best, but the risk of imparting the all-important information is enormously increased by the fact that some of the depositors of the money will be certain before long to be dissatisfied with the way in which it is being spent. There will be fearful rows over the distribution of the subsistence money among the evicted, and when the estate managers fall out the name of the reliable trustee will become common property. And as soon as his name is known the law will have him in its clutches in the twinkling of an eye. The risks attaching to the functions of a trustee will lead all solid men to avoid the office. The "reliable man" will therefore be one who has little to lose. He will have all the money at his own disposal, and the temptation will be enormous for him to bolt with the swag. Even when he renders up every penny, he will be suspected of feathering his own nest, and it is expecting too much from ordinary human nature to suppose that men so circumstanced will not sometimes yield to the temptation. This is recognized by the authors of the Plan of the Campaign, for they propose that the National League should guarantee to make the money good if the trustee should prove dishonest. But to this there are two serious objections. First, the National League has given no such guarantee, and secondly, if it did it could not meet its engagements. The Plan of Campaign is the plan, not of the National League, but of *United Ireland*, and nowhere, so far as I have been able to discover, has the National League officially committed itself to the newspaper plan of campaign. Mr. Parnell, who is the man on the horse, is absent. Mr. Dillon supports it heartily. Mr. Harrington, who is the soul and centre of the Central League, contented himself with expressing a more or less appreciative criticism as to its practicability. But how can the Executive at Dublin guarantee the tenants in Woodford or in Clare against any defalcations by a secret trustee, whose very name is concealed from them, whose disbursements they have no means of checking, and over whose actions they have absolutely no control? Secrecy and security are incompatible.

The whole efforts of the landlord will be directed to extract by fear or favour the name of the man who is holding the rent. The managing committee all tenants all know the trustee's name. The managers, therefore, will be the first marked for eviction. They will be the first to draw upon the estate fund. It is easy to see what a stimulus this will give to the distrust of the Celt, who sees the managers living in luxury on his rent while the ejectment process is held suspended over his head until such time as the estate fund is exhausted. It may be possible to band the tenants together in such iron discipline as to falsify all previous generalizations concerning Hibernian communicativeness and the distrustful temper of the Celt; but the work has yet to be done, and until it is completed sceptical Saxons will be inclined to believe that it looks better on paper than it will work in reality.

Another source of weakness is the necessity for dispensations to broken tenants and shopkeepers. Broken tenants are only to pay the percentage of abatement demanded from the landlord. That is to say, on the Clanricarde estate they are to pay 40 per cent. of their rent into the fund instead of 60 per cent. That will not be forthcoming. The strong will have to bear the burdens of the weak. But at the same time some of the strongest, the shopkeepers, who are holders

of town parks, are to be allowed to settle with the landlord, because a judgment against them may mean ruin. The same argument will exempt every tenant who has other means of livelihood. On the whole, the prospects of the Plan of Campaign are not quite so radiant as its promoters would make us believe.

#### A REPLY TO THIS CRITICISM.

Since then events have moved rapidly, and the number of estates that have adopted the Plan of Campaign has increased daily. When our Commissioner paid his second visit to Ireland he had an opportunity of discussing the points of the foregoing criticism point by point with Mr. Dillon and Mr. Harrington. The following are their replies *seriatim* to the objections stated above :—

##### 1. Impossibility of Secrecy.

A. The money is paid, not to the estate committee, but to a member of Parliament. He deposits it with a trustee who may not be known to any member of the estate committee. In case it were to leak out who had the money, arrangements are made for its being passed on in such a fashion that the actual holder of the money could never be discovered.

##### 2. Absence of Security.

A. It is true the trustee is usually a man of straw. But he can be trusted. A man need not be rich to be honest. Even if he wished to fly with the money where could he go to? The Irish race has a long arm. There is no place in the world where a defaulting scoundrel who had stolen the trust fund of the Irish peasant would be safe. Besides, a simple Irish peasant has practically no opportunities of escape such as lie open to the defaulting gambler on the Stock Exchange.

##### 3. No Guarantee Fund in the National League.

A. The National League can always raise money to any extent when there is an adequate cause, for it can draw upon the earnings of every member of the Irish race all over the world. The more we are prosecuted the better the money comes in. A campaign of extermination, say, on Clanricarde's estate, would bring us in tens of thousands of pounds.

##### 4. Quarrels about Distributing the Money.

A. They will not arise, and even if everything were certain to happen that you predict the tenants would not realize it, do not as a matter of fact realize the risk. What they know is they cannot pay the full rent. We take what they can pay, and will use it to protect them from the vengeance of the landlord.

##### 5. Celtic Distrust.

A. Yes, that might be calculated on in theory, but the fact is the other way. The trust with which poor peasants besiege the Nationalist rent office and literally force their gold upon us is very touching. Nothing like it has ever been seen in this country before. The feeling is universal. Never have we seen such enthusiasm; go and see it yourself if you doubt.

##### 6. If it spreads too far it will become Unwieldy.

A. We do not wish it to spread too far. If twenty or thirty estates are well organized, and the rent safely under lock and key, that is about as many as the National League could well undertake to look after. If more than twenty or thirty wish to adopt the plan, well and good. They can do it on their own account. The only two very large estates under the plan are Clanricarde's and Dillon's. In a fortnight these will be thoroughly organized, and if we beat the landlord there victory will follow all along the line.

#### IS THERE NO REMEDY?

The Castle repudiates any right or authority to swoop down upon the Nationalist rent collectors and impound their money. Their rent days are indeed held under protection of the police, who have no power to interfere with Pat or Ned merely because he hands over gold and silver to a Parnellite M.P. The landlord has no remedy against the temporary receiver of his rent, excepting by the doubtful procedure of a prosecution for conspiracy. He might get an order against Mr. Dillon or Mr. Redmond to hand over the money if they held it and proof were afforded the court that it was in their possession, but it is notoriously not in their possession. They han't it over in all secrecy to the mysterious trustee. Before anything can be done this man of mystery must be unearthed. The problem is how to do it. The procedure favoured by the Castle is that of bankruptcy. First you make your tenant a bankrupt, and then you cross-examine him as to where his money has gone to. If he refuses to reply, he goes to gaol instanter. If he says he paid it to Mr. Dillon or to his priest, or to any members of the committee of management, Mr. Dillon, the priest, and every member of the committee of management can be summoned and put to the question as to where the money has gone to. Refusal to answer is contempt of court, avenged by summary imprisonment. Thus step by step the authorities hope they may be able in this hunt-the-slipper fashion to track the missing rent up to the unknown trustee. It is a chase in which the Government can be baffled with ease—first by perjury, which is regarded as a venial sin when the Government is to be defeated, and secondly by the simple expedient of handing the money on to an unknown trustee. For instance, all that a trustee who is tracked down needs to do is to leave his fund in a particular place known, let us say, to Mr. Dillon. At the dead of night, some trusty emissary from Mr. Dillon goes to that place and removes the fund; what can the trustee say? Only that while he slept it was removed, and who could prove that it was not stolen? No. The informer now as ever remains the sole hope of the English Government, the solitary pillar by which law and order are supported in Ireland. And nowadays informers are scarce.

#### WHY THE TENANTS CANNOT GIVE UP THEIR HOLDINGS.

The landlords and their advocates are shocked beyond measure at the iniquity of the suggestion that the tenants should fix their own rents. It is absurd, monstrous, &c., that one party to a contract should fix his own terms. As if for generations the landlords had not fixed the rent without the tenant having anything whatever to say to it. The true system of course would be for the two parties to agree by mutual consent what it should be. But those who down to 1881 insisted on the divine right of the landlord to dictate to the tenant what he should pay have no right now to cry out in horror when the boot is on the other leg, and the tenant insists upon deciding what rent he will pay. It will be said that if the tenant wants to have a voice in fixing his rent he should give notice to quit unless it is reduced. That is what an English tenant would do, but that is impossible in Ireland, because the tenant is joint owner with the landlord. To give notice to quit means making a present of his homestead, outbuildings, and improvements to his landlord partner. The tenants if acting in concert to enforce a reduction must give notice jointly, and that precludes the possibility of selling their tenant right. But for the risk of sacrificing their invested capital, they

could easily by combination compel the landlords to reduce rents to the level of the market.

#### LANDLORDS AS RENT FIXERS.

I have not made any accusations against Irish landlords. They compare favourably as a whole with Irish farmers as far as liberality goes. The farmer to the labourer is quite as hard as, if not harder than, the landlord to the farmer. But there is one point upon which the landlord's judgment is not to be trusted, and that is the amount of rent that can be legitimately extracted from the tenant. Of this a very startling instance was mentioned by the *Freeman's Journal* a few weeks since. The Marquis of Waterford is by no means a bad type of Irish landlord. He is distinctly among the better landlords of Ireland. But judged by the standard of the Land Court his estimate of a fair rent is almost as outrageous as that of Lord Clanricarde on those farms whose rent the Land Commission cut down from 20 to 50 per cent. The following is the extract from the *Freeman* :

Some time ago Lord Waterford determined to raise the rents on his Wicklow estate, and accordingly applied to the Land Commission to have "fair" rents fixed. The subjoined table shows the result. It gives in each case the old rent, the gross valuation of the holding, the rent demanded by the landlord, and the judicial rent fixed by the Commissioners. The holdings are all situated in the townlands of Ballynocken and Ballynastocken, in the parish of Blackditches, and Poor Law union of Naas :—

Tenant.	Old Rent.	Gross Poor-law Valuation.	Rent demanded by landlord	Judicial Rent.
E. Nolan .....	£ 8 2 0	£ 8 10	£ 11 0	£ 6 10 0
D. M'Evoy ...	7 1 0	9 5	12 10	5 15 0
M. Cullen .....	21 18 8	21 15	29 6	19 10 0
J. Byrne .....	3 18 4	5 0	7 0	3 7 6
A. Cullen .....	10 10 0	11 0	16 0	9 10 0
M. Cullen .....	8 9 4	8 10	12 10	6 5 0
A. Doyle .....	5 17 0	8 10	13 0	4 0 0
P. Farrington .....	6 6 8	7 5	11 10	4 15 0
B. Farrington .....	6 6 8	7 5	11 10	4 15 0
B. Farrington, sen. ....	6 14 4	7 10	12 10	4 15 0
M. Farrington .....	3 19 0	4 10	7 0	3 7 6
E. Farrington..	6 4 2	7 5	12 0	5 10 0
J. Nolan .....	6 11 10	7 10	12 0	5 10 0
A. Nolan .....	9 10 6	10 10	15 0	7 10 0
J. Reilly .....	18 6 7	19 0	28 0	13 10 0
T. Norton .....	9 3 4	10 10	14 0	7 15 0
C. Cullen .....	12 19 2	14 15	19 10	11 0 0
Representatives of Andrew M'Evoy .....	11 6 2	12 15	17 17	9 10 0
B. Cullen .....	7 9 0	8 10	12 0	6 10 0
J. Cullen .....	7 17 4	9 2	12 10	7 0 0
M. Cullen .....	8 18 6	10 5	14 0	7 10 0
Jas. Cullen ...	6 8 6	7 2	11 10	5 10 0
L. Cullen, Jun.	8 5 6	9 5	12 10	7 10 0
L. Cullen, Sen.	7 7 8	8 10	12 10	5 15 0
T. Connor.....	5 11 4	6 5	10 0	4 10 0
W. Costelloe...	4 1 8	4 15	8 0	3 8 0
C. Donovan ...	4 4 6	5 0	7 10	3 8 0
M. Higgins ...	2 13 8	3 15	5 0	2 2 0
M. M'Evoy ...	11 6 2	12 15	18 0	9 0 0
J. Norton .....	16 16 10	18 12	25 0	13 10 0
P. Norton .....	8 1 6	9 0	13 0	6 5 0
C. Norton .....	4 11 0	5 12	8 0	3 5 0

266 19 7    299 3    431 3    217 17 6

Thus, according to this statement, which has never been contradicted, this landlord, who is no rack-renter, but, on the contrary, quite a liberal man in his way, actually proposed to add 70 per cent. to a rental which when examined by the Land Court was declared to be 18 per cent. too high. Lord Waterford evidently thought the increase justifiable, for he applied to the Land Court to have the rents fixed. Yet the Land Court cut down his estimate of a fair rent by almost exactly one-half.

The extent to which the Plan has been adopted is not yet known. The movement is spreading, but up to going to press it had not been put in operation in more than a dozen counties, and on only a score of estates, big and little. The only large estates committed to the fight are the Clanricarde and the Dillon.

The following is a list of properties where up to December 4 the tenants had actually paid their rents, or some portion of the rent, into the hands of trustees :—

ESTATES WHERE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN ACTUALLY ADOPTED.

County.	Estate.	Reductions Demanded.	
		Ord.	Jud.
Carlow .....	Mrs. Hagarty .....	15	—
Cork .....	Ponsonby .....	35	25
	Mrs. Bourere .....	—	—
	Mrs. Carroll .....	15	—
	Hon. Moore Smith .....	50	40
	Lady Nugent .....	20	—
Galway .....	Clanricarde, Lord .....	40	—
	Clonbrock, Lord .....	50	25
	Dundandle, Lord .....	—	—
Kerry .....	Blennenhassett .....	—	—
	Kemmare, Lord .....	30	—
King's County	Clibborn, Mrs. ....	25	—
	Breddon's Agency .....	30	—
Leitrim .....	Clements, Mr. ....	25	—
	Massey, Lord .....	25	—
Limerick .....	Curragh Bridge Estate .....	30	—
	Cappamore Estate .....	—	—
	O'Grady, The, Estate .....	40	30
	Rutagh (Herbertstown) .....	30	—
	Towerhill .....	—	—
Longford .....	MacEvoy, Mr. ....	—	—
Mayo .....	Dillon, Lord .....	25	—
Meath .....	Bellew, Mr. ....	20	—
Queen's County	Lansdowne, Lord .....	35	20
	Freyne, Lord de .....	—	—
Sligo .....	Murphy, Mr. ....	—	—
Tipperary .....	Kennedy, Miss .....	25	—
Not specified .....	Nolan Farrell .....	35	—
	W. Duckett .....	—	—
	Knox, Col. ....	—	25
	Westmeath, Lord .....	—	—

It is sometimes remarked that the tenants must be able to pay their rent in full to their landlords because they are paying rent to the National League. That remark is the product of ignorance. The National League is only collecting the rent minus the reduction which the tenants say is needed to enable them to meet their engagement. Even then they are not paying up even the reduced rent in full. On the Clanricarde property there is about £20,000 due to Lord Clanricarde. The tenants ask for 40 per cent. reduction, which would reduce the rent to £12,000. But they are not paying all this in to the trustees. They are only asked to pay half of it into the estate fund, and the most sanguine do not expect that more than £5,000 will be so banked. Ability to bank £5,000 is certainly no proof of ability to pay £20,000, yet that is

what the argument amounts to. The case of the Ponsonby estate in Cork—the only estate on which returns have been published of the money paid—brings out very clearly the inability of the tenants to pay even the reduced rent. The proprietor of the property refused to accept his rents less 35 per cent. on old rents, and 25 per cent. on judicial rents. A half-year's rent of the estate amounts in round numbers to—

£3,384

Net amount already deposited in the hands of trustees .....	£1,290
Percentage on that amount retained by the tenants .....	410
Sum due to the trustees of the estate fund by tenants unable to pay the full deposit .....	240
Half-yearly value of seven evicted holdings, and of land in owner's occupation .....	650
Rent due by insolvent tenants.....	794
	3,384

## PLAN OF CAMPAIGN RESOLVED ON.

County.	Estate.	Reductions Demanded.	
		Ord.	Jud.
Clare .....	Mrs. Cullinan .....	20	—
	Lord Fitzgerald .....	25	—
	Pierce O'Brien .....	20	—
Cork .....	Mr. Vandeleur .....	—	—
	Lambkin Tenantry .....	25	—
	Mrs. Lysaght .....	—	—
Derry .....	Sir James Mackenzie .....	—	—
	Casement .....	—	—
Fermanagh ...	Diapers' Company .....	—	—
	Skinner's Company .....	—	—
Kildare .....	Dean Beresford .....	20	—
	John La Touche .....	20*	—
Kilkenny .....	Hon. Mrs. Butler .....	30	—
	Lady Ribton .....	20	—
King's County	Mr. Smurthwick .....	20	—
Limerick .....	Lord Digby .....	25	15
	Morgan's Charity .....	25	—
Longford .....	Col. King-Harman .....	—	—
Meath .....	Lord Annaly .....	—	—
Roscommon ...	Lord Headford .....	—	—
Tipperary .....	Lord Granard .....	30	—
	Robert Hant .....	40	—
Tyrone .....	Mrs. Fetherstonhaugh .....	30	—
	Mr. Atwell .....	25	—

And seven others.

"There is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip." Tenants will borrow and get into debt to pay their landlords. They will do neither to make up their rent for an Estate Fund. On the whole, the Irish tenant is likely to prefer to keep his rent in his own pocket to handing it over to an invisible trustee. For one estate where the rents are banked there will probably be twenty where they will not be paid.

## STATE OF CAMPAIGN.

The following is a summary of the progress of the campaign down to the issue of *United Ireland*, Dec. 11:—

Estates where some money was paid to trustees .....	31
Estates where tenants have resolved to adopt Plan of Campaign .....	31
Estates where the plan has produced concession.....	4
	66

The total sum of money paid to the Nationalist rent

collectors was estimated at about £20,000 in all up to Dec. 13.

The fiercest struggles are likely to take place where the landlord and tenant differ as to the amount of reduction. The following table shows the estates on which, so far as is known up to the present, this difference of opinion exists:—

## DISPUTES AS TO AMOUNT OF ABATEMENT.

Landlord.	Locality.	Acres.	Valua-tion.	De-manded.		Offered	
				Ord.	Jud.	Ord.	Jud.
Ashley, Evelyn .....	Sligo .....	12,426	£5,801	30	20	25	15
Blood, W. B. ....	Clare .....	2,464	565	33	..	25	..
Burnaby, Mrs. ....	Creedwood .....	..	..	..	..	15	..
Bushe prop. (Recd.)	Waterford .....	..	..	..	..	20	15
Carew, Lord .....	Wexford .....	17,830	9,070	25	..	15	..
Churchie, Mr. ....	Galway .....	7,823	2,427	..	..	15	..
Clanricarde, Lord. ....	Galway .....	49,025	19,634	40	..	20	..
Clifden, Lord. ....	Galway .....	..	..	30	..	20	..
Cloynell, Lord. ....	..	20,940	13,738	30	..	20	..
Creed, Mr. ....	Cork .....	..	..	..	..	12½	..
Crooke, James .....	Galway .....	2,325	675	..	..	15	..
Cuffe, Mr. ....	Athlone .....	..	..	35	25	25	..
Delacour, Rev. R. W.	Ballinamorra .....	..	..	25	..	25	..
Drummond, Mr. .....	Kerry .....	29,730	3,065	30	..	20	..
Errington, Sir G. ....	Cashel, &c. ....	..	..	30	..	20	..
Herbert, H. A. ....	Muckross, Kerry .....	47,238	10,547	..	..	15	..
Jameson, Rev. Mr. ....	Ballinasloe .....	..	..	30	..	..	..
Jenkinson prop. ....	Kilkenny .....	..	..	..	..	15	..
Johnson, Mr. ....	Cavan .....	1,016	625	25	..	15	..
Lansdowne, Marq. of	Queen's County .....	9,000	5,320	30-5	..	15	..
Lloyds, Mr. ....	Athlone .....	..	..	25	..	15	..
O'Callaghan, Capt. ....	Clare .....	..	..	30	20	20	..
O'Connor, D. M. ....	Belanegare .....	..	..	25	..	15	..
Prescott & McCarthy .....	Kilkenny .....	..	..	30	..	20	..
Rossmore, Lord .....	Carlow, &c. ....	14,839	13,427	30	..	10	..
Singleton Estate .....	..	..	..	30	..	20	..
Stewart, W. T. ....	Cork .....	..	..	..	..	15	..
Tully Estate .....	Glenroe .....	..	..	25	..	20	..
Waller, Rev. M. ....	Pallaskerry .....	..	..	25	..	15	..

This represents the preliminary stage of the higgling of the market, and on many of these estates amicable settlements may be arrived at. Whether the tenants' demands are or are not excessive is a question which no one can answer without examining the circumstances of each estate.

The most serious dispute under this head, excepting the notorious Clanricarde's, has arisen between Lord Lansdowne and his tenants in Queen's County. In Kerry Lord Lansdowne has made reductions of 20 per cent. on judicial rents and from 30 to 35 per cent. on the old rents. This he explained was due to the exceptional condition of Kerry, and he only offers his Queen's County tenants 10 to 20 per cent. reductions on non-judicial and no reduction on the judicial rents. They demand Kerry terms. Lord Lansdowne's estate in Queen's County has an area of about 9,000 acres. It is principally grass, and is held as a rule by farmers whose holdings range from 100 to 300 acres. Of 102 tenants forty-six hold on lease and fifty-six under yearly tenancies. Of the latter several now hold judicial rents. The estate is undulating, and the hills are held by smaller men with farms of about twenty to forty acres in extent. The valuation of the property is £5,320, and the gross rental is about £7,000. In the last eighteen years Lord Lansdowne spent about £22,000 in buildings and drainage. The rent has remained much the same for the last twenty years. In 1880 Lord Lansdowne considered that they cultivated their holdings fairly well. Now, however, his agent, Mr. Townsend Trench, is irate with them because they will not do anything to improve their land. They will neither establish a creamery, use good bulls, nor experiment on silage. For all these things he refuses to give them the reduction for which they ask, and the result is that the tenants are

\* Below Griffith's.

going to try the Plan of Campaign against him, and to bank their rents with trustees on Saturday next. Mr. Trench has given 15 per cent. reduction on an adjoining estate belonging to a different landlord, and this is urged by his Queen's County tenants as an additional reason why he should return a favourable answer to their petition.

#### THE OUTLOOK.

No rent will be paid in Ireland this winter to landlords who are not just enough to make a considerable abatement, excepting by tenants weak enough to be terrorized into paying in full a rent which the land has not yielded. Wherever the landlords are reasonable in time there will be payment and peace. Wherever the tenants are divided and weak, and have any credit left, there will be payment and debt. But wherever the tenants, united and strong, are confronted by landlords obstinate and unyielding, there will be no payment and war. And the same result will follow where the tenants have exhausted their credit, cannot sell their stock, and have no money. Roughly speaking, there will be no rent paid on two classes of estates—

- (1) Where the tenants have neither money, credit, nor saleable stock.
  - (2) Where the tenants are united in demanding a reduction which the landlord refuses to give.
- And in the same way it may be said that rent will be paid in Ireland this winter—
- (1) Where the landlord makes a reasonable reduction to his tenants.
  - (2) Where the landlords can terrorize tenants into debt or the sale of their stock to pay rent in full.

It is impossible at this early stage to express any opinion as to the area over which rent-paying will cease in Ireland this winter. Reductions have been made on all the better class of Irish estates. But the residuum is large, how large it is impossible as yet to say.

The National League circulars to which I have already made reference contain only occasional references to the ability of the tenant to pay. Now and then, however, there is an allusion to the subject. The secretary of a branch on the borders of Cavan and Longford writes: "To sum up the situation here this winter—50 per cent. of the tenants will be able to pay half rent in November; 30 per cent. can pay no rent, and 20 per cent. will pay all." In this district, at last gale day, Chief Justice Morris gave 20 per cent. on his judicial rents, and paid besides the whole of the poor rate. The secretary of another Cavan branch reports: "Nine-tenths of the farmers will not be able to pay any rent in this district this year, as their harvest was late and nearly all lost by the late rainstorm; it is all growing together in the stooks." There is reason to fear that these districts are by no means exceptional.

If landlords were wise, they would agree with their tenants quickly while they are in the way with them, before the potatoes go bad\* and before temper gets too high. The services of the Government could not be better employed than by intervening amicably to effect a compromise, instead of waiting till they are compelled by the courts to carry out evictions. The probability at present is that most intelligent landlords will make reductions. The rest will run up arrears that will never be paid, and in the end will get less than those who give temporary abatements.

#### THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN ON THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

"HAD you a bad passage?" said His Grace the Archbishop, as he received our Commissioner on the afternoon of November 30. "How the wind blew! I thought of you as I heard it last night." "It was pretty rough on the sea, but you are having it now pretty rough on shore. How is this prosecution of Mr. Dillon going to affect the situation this winter?" "Have you heard what has been decided in his case?" asked the Archbishop, and as I had been in court I was able to explain that everything had been postponed for at least ten days, after which the question will come up whether or not he ought to give bail to be of good behaviour or whether he should go to gaol. "Suppose that he is confronted with the two alternatives of giving bail or going to gaol, which does your Grace think that he will adopt?"

The Archbishop replied, "I have not seen him since the legal notices were served on him. I have no knowledge of how he may be personally inclined, or of how he may be advised to act. But I trust he will not allow himself to be influenced by any mistaken notions of chivalry and honour, so as to submit to imprisonment rather than give the required bail. If John Dillon takes such a course, every public man in whom our people have confidence would feel himself constrained to follow his example. And so, by the simple procedure of serving a number of formal notices, the imprisonment of all the leading members of the Parliamentary party could be effected. It would be

nothing short of downright folly to take a step that would naturally lead to so disastrous a result."

"But what would not be said of Mr. Dillon if he took the course which you indicate? Would it not be said that the 'paid patriot' and professional agitator shrank from the sacrifices which Father Fahy, a poor parish priest, made without flinching?"

"Well," replied Dr. Walsh, "I really know nothing of the details of Father Fahy's case. It so happened that I was absent from Ireland for a few weeks about the time

\* On this point I have received the following note from an experienced agriculturist in the South of Ireland: "The potato crop has been worse since 1847 than in the present season. In the years immediately preceding the introduction of the Champion variety, you will recollect that the tubers were very extensively diseased—from 30 to 60 per cent. When potatoes are fully matured before lifting, and carefully stored, the progress of the disease fungus is effectually checked. It is, therefore, under such circumstances an error to suppose that they give way in the heap; but if they are not fully ripe previous to being dug out, subsequent decay is certain. The only unusual incident that has occurred in the crop of 1880 is that in some instances the continuous rainfall brought on a second growth, inducing 'supertuberation.' That is, after the haulm had partially decayed the continuous moisture caused it to assume a new vigour, and the nutritious compounds in the tubers were called upon to assist this unnatural growth, thereby rendering them unfit for table use, and making the potato what is commonly designated 'naggish.'"

that he was imprisoned. But I understand that in his case the point was this, that he was charged with having used words of an abominable character—with having, in fact, threatened a certain landlord in a most violent manner; that he in the most unqualified way denies having used such words or any words like them; that, notwithstanding all this, and there being no evidence whatever against his statement but the uncorroborated evidence of the complainant,\* he was called upon to give bail in circumstances in which the giving of it would have amounted to an acknowledgment of guilt; and that, strong in the conviction of his innocence—knowing, in fact, that he had not committed the offence of which he was charged—he could not feel himself at liberty to give the bail, and so he had to submit to an arbitrary imprisonment. John Dillon's case stands on a totally different footing. As I understand the case, he denies no fact that is charged against him. I cannot see, then, that there is any parallel between the cases. In giving bail he withdraws nothing that he has said, he disclaims the responsibility of nothing that he has done. He simply submits to an order of the court, which he could resist only by the taking of a step which, for the reason I have mentioned, would in all probability result in the practical suppression of the right of public meeting and of constitutional action in the defence of the rights of our people."

"That is to say, the Government would then be able to suspend habeas corpus in Ireland by filing a few affidavits?"

"Precisely, and that is not an opportunity which should lightly be placed in the hands of any Government."

"It seems as if your Grace were no believer in the high-handed policy which finds favour in some quarters. But do you mean to say that there is no excess to which the National League could go that would justify repressive measures?"

"I think the strength of the National League depends upon the combination of many causes; and if it went to such excesses as you suggest it would destroy itself. It is strong, for instance, at present, because on the whole it has a moral justification for its demand. If it were to advance demands for which there was no moral justification, it would compel us to condemn it."

"You will pardon me, but do you know what the landlords will say to that? They would remark that the power of the Church was now only a power for evil. The League availed itself of the support of the priests as long as they went with it. The moment they went against it their authority would be repudiated."

"No doubt that may be said," rejoined the Archbishop, with a smile, "but those who say it forget that it was a single vigorous letter from Archbishop Croke that broke the back of the No Rent Manifesto. Of this we need not be afraid, and the fact that we wield that moral influence is never lost sight of by the leaders of the League, whose influence over the local branches is undoubtedly a moral influence."

Q. Then, of course, you are against the suppression of the National League?

\* A correspondent writes to the *Daily Express* on this point to remark that "two servants of Mr. Lewis and four constables are ready to swear to having heard Father Fahy make the challenge to 'blind Lewis' complained of. This was stated to the bench. The Crown prosecutor proposed an adjournment of the case for a fortnight (without demanding bail), to enable Father Fahy to prepare his defence. The bench held that the evidence required that Father Fahy should give bail, and for refusing to do so he had to go to gaol. Every one in Galway knows that he is merely used as the scapegoat of others."

A. If a proclamation were to be issued to-morrow for the suppression of the League, the practical effect of the proclamation would, of course, be twofold. The central organization here in Dublin would cease to exist, and the local branches, now established in practically every parish and district in Ireland, would be deprived of their present constitutional character, and would be turned, in fact, into so many centres of secret organization. It is easy enough to "drive discontent beneath the surface." But in dealing with explosive elements, in the social as in the physical order, it is more prudent, I should say, to give them free scope in the open. As regards the action of the central organization of the League, I can only say that I have personal knowledge of many instances where the influence of that organization has been effectively used for the purpose of moderating the vigour of some local branches which but for this influence wholesomely exercised might easily degenerate into violence. I must say, and I say it now most deliberately, that I cannot conceive any act of authority more directly calculated to plunge this country into confusion and anarchy than the suppression of the National League.

Q. Now, your Grace, what have you to say about the famous "Plan of Campaign"? Did not such a "scandalous outrage on the principles of common honesty," as it is styled every day, scandalize you, the official chief of the Christian Church in Ireland?

A. Well, I confess that at first I was a little startled at it. I was not only startled but grieved. I had never yet had cause to express my dissent from any portion of the programme of the present national movement. I speak, as you understand, of the dissent that it would have been my duty as an Irish Bishop to express if that programme, as it came under my observation in this diocese, contained anything that I should regard as contrary to the principles of justice and of morality. Notwithstanding all my sympathy with the movement, its adoption in this diocese of any unjust or immoral means for the furtherance of its object would, of course, put upon me the painful duty of publishing an episcopal condemnation of it. We Catholics, as you know, cannot act on the principle, rather fashionable, I am sorry to say, nowadays, that "the end justifies the means." So apprehending that the "Plan of Campaign" might at any moment be brought into requisition in this diocese of Dublin, I was grieved to think, as I did think for the moment, that it might perhaps prove inconsistent with my duty as Bishop of the diocese to abstain from a condemnation of it. But when I looked into the matter carefully, as it was, of course, my duty to do, my anxiety was relieved. On closer inspection, the difficulties that had at first embarrassed me practically disappeared.

Q. That is very interesting. But it would be still more so to know what the difficulties were and how they were surmounted, especially the obvious difficulty of allowing tenants to fix their own rents.

A. Of course the great difficulty—indeed, I may say almost the only one—was that the "Plan of Campaign" leaves it practically to the judgment of the tenants—that is to say, to the judgment of one of the parties to the contract of tenancy—to fix the terms on which that contract is to continue in force. That, no doubt, in the abstract seems at first sight a formidable difficulty. But we must look at the other side of the question. If the tenant is to be viewed merely as one of the two parties to the rent contract, in what other light are we to view the landlord? He, too, is only one of the contracting parties, and he has had the fixing of the terms of the contract long enough. Is it quite clear that the tenants are to be blamed if they claim to have their turn now?

Q. But does that argument not ignore the fact that the tenants are setting aside contracts already in existence?

A. In the view of the case I am now contemplating, practically no. The old contracts, even those that have taken the form of "statutory" tenancies under the Land Act of 1881, with "judicial" rents, are not at present "in possession," to use a technical phrase.

Q. "In possession"—what does that mean?

A. It is a term familiar to Churchmen, and possibly also to lawyers, which implies that the agreement or contract being valid and in possession has nine points of the law on its side, and therefore the *onus probandi* is thrown upon the other side.

Q. Do you maintain that there are practically no contracts of tenancy now valid and binding in Ireland?

A. I would not put it exactly in that way. This is how I would state my view of the case. It is admitted on all hands that practically all over Ireland reductions, and large reductions, are to be made in the rents, even in the judicial rents. The question is as to the amount of those reductions. Whatever inconvenience there may be in having that grave question decided by the tenants, I must maintain that there is just the same inconvenience—indeed, I see in one way a much greater inconvenience—in having it decided by the landlords. The landlord, like the tenant, is now merely "one of the two contracting parties," neither more nor less.

Q. But surely this is a bad state of things to exist in a country having a responsible Government in this nineteenth century?

A. A bad state of things! What could be more deplorable? It is simply a disgrace to the Legislature of the country that things should be left in this state of disorganization. But we surely are not to blame for it. Within the last six or seven months two proposals have been made by the friends of our Irish tenants, the adoption of either of which by Parliament would have saved us, or rather, I should say, would have saved the Government of the country, from the responsibility of the present deplorable state of affairs.

Q. I suppose you are referring to bills rejected by the Imperial Parliament?

A. Yes. There was Mr. Gladstone's Land Purchase Bill of the present year, and then there was Mr. Parnell's subsequent proposal for the relief of the tenants. Both of those measures proposed to take this whole question of the present fair price or fair value of the land out of the hands of the landlords on the one side and of the tenants on the other, putting it altogether into the hands of the constituted judicial tribunals of the country.

Q. Mr. Gladstone's bill? But you are not harking back to that untimely birth that perished as it saw the light?

A. Well, as to Mr. Gladstone's bill, I hope it may not seem ungracious to find fault with either of those two great legislative proposals that have made the present year ever memorable in the parliamentary history of England. But, as I have said on a former occasion, somewhat similar to this, I know of few greater instances of folly than that displayed by the Irish landlords in rejecting, as they did, the splendid terms offered to them in Mr. Gladstone's Land Purchase Bill. All that, however, is past and gone. The people of England—and, practically, the people of all Great Britain and of Ireland—have put their veto on the revival of any such scheme of purchase. I mention it now, not that I regard it as of any further reality in the future of British legislation, but that I wish to have it kept in mind that such a proposal was in fact made within the last few months, and that it was rejected with something not very far removed

from scorn. Would it be so rejected by the landlords now?

Q. I suppose you would say the same as to Mr. Parnell's bill?

A. Yes. Mr. Parnell's bill, put forward, as it was, backed by the full strength of the Irish Parliamentary Party, would have put this whole question of a fair rent into the hands of a judicial tribunal. It is almost incomprehensible how forgetful many persons seem to be of events that are only a few months old. It is not yet three months since Mr. Parnell's bill was under discussion in the House of Commons. Its provisions were then and there fully set forth by its author. They were published in all our newspapers. And yet after three short months we find the most ludicrously distorted views as to what those provisions were. I can have no doubt that many persons of the so-called "Loyalist" section of Irish society believe what they say when they speak, as they do speak, of Mr. Parnell's bill as a bill for cutting down the rents by 50 per cent. I need not say to you that Mr. Parnell's bill was nothing of the kind; it left it absolutely to the courts to decide the amount of rent to be paid, or in other words, the amount of reduction to be made in the existing rents, whether "judicial" or otherwise. It required, indeed, from every tenant a payment of 50 per cent. as an essential preliminary before he could come in for any of the benefits of this procedure. But this payment was one merely "on account." The amount of the rent really to be paid was to be fixed by the courts, and, we must not allow it to be forgotten, the courts to which Mr. Parnell's bill would have thus referred the settlement of this question were identically the same courts that had fixed those judicial rents which they were now to be called upon to reconsider. The judicial rents were to be so reconsidered in view of the present depression in the prices of agricultural produce. One of the stock arguments of the opponents of the bill was that the rents had originally been fixed by those courts in view of the probability of the occurrence of such depressions. This allegation was totally denied, and with excellent reason, by the supporters of the bill. It was, in fact, the point on which the whole question turned. What, then, could be fairer than Mr. Parnell's proposal to refer the decision of the question to the courts themselves? At all events that offer was made by Mr. Parnell on behalf of the tenant-farmers of Ireland. It was rejected. If it had been accepted, the fixing of fair reductions and of fair rents would not now be in the hands of the tenants. It would be in the hands of the constituted courts of the realm. And if the present "rough and ready" way has had to be substituted for a formal judicial procedure the blame surely does not lie at the doors either of the Irish tenants or of their parliamentary representatives and political leaders, who did their best in every possible way to have the matter referred for settlement to the courts.

Q. Well, well, it may have been a mistake to reject the bill; but it has to be settled somehow. The only question is as to how. We are dealing not with the past but the present—the fixing of rent.

A. Precisely. There must be some means found of deciding this question of the value of land. Every means have been exhausted of having the question referred to the legal decision of the courts. Mr. Gladstone tried this, and failed. Then Mr. Parnell tried it, and his failure was of the two perhaps the more complete. So now, in spite of all our efforts, it has been thrown into the hands of the tenants themselves.

Q. It is sometimes urged against the view of the case taken by the tenants' friends that if the tenant wished for

a change in the existing terms of the rent contract he should begin by giving up the holding which he has hitherto held on those terms which he now repudiates as unfair and impossible.

A. I am glad you mentioned that point. It was for a time one of my outstanding difficulties. But, as a well-known member of the Irish Parliamentary Party has recently said in reference to it, the course of recent land legislation since 1870 has cut the ground from under every objection of the sort. Until 1870 the laws of this country recognized but one ownership in the soil—that, as a matter of course, was the ownership of the landlord. While that state of things continued, a tenant in thus holding out for a reduction of rent undoubtedly should have been regarded as keeping possession of that which was legally the property of another. But, whatever grounds there would have been in that former state of things for requiring him to surrender that property if he found it impossible to comply with the conditions under which he held it, the case now stands in a wholly different light as the result of the Land Laws of 1870 and 1881. For now, beyond all question, the tenant is recognized by the law as having his ownership as well.

Q. And expressly recognized by the present Government?

A. It is there as a matter of law. But, as you say, its existence is expressly recognized by the present Government. They have, in fact, proclaimed it as their policy to get rid of this "dual ownership" in the land. So they recognize its existence. As to abolishing it, that can have but one meaning, the adoption of Michael Davitt's programme of the "abolition of landlordism" in Ireland. For we have only the two classes of legal owners in the soil—the landlords and the tenants. We may safely assume that it is not part of the ministerial policy to get rid of the tenants, or, at least, of all the tenants. And while the tenants are there no way but one exists of putting an end to the dual ownership of land, and that is by putting an end to landlordism.

Q. But how does this bear on your remark in reference to the tenant's surrender, or non-surrender, of his holding?

A. What I wished to say was this—that, while the enant had no legal ownership in the land, he was holding in to what was unquestionably the legal property of the andlord, and of the landlord only. But now that the property of the tenant in his holding has received full legal recognition—for its existence, at all events, is recognized as fully as the existence of the property of the andlord—a tenant forcibly ejected from possession is ejected from the possession of the landlord's property, no doubt, but he is ejected also from the possession of that which is his own. The existence, then, of our present system of and tenure in Ireland has put this question of rent-fixing on

a very special footing. It can no longer with safety be left in the hands of either landlord or tenant. The maintenance of social order requires that it be dealt with by some authority independent of both. Every effort has been made by the tenants and their friends to have it so dealt with. All those efforts have failed. They have failed through the influence of the landlord class. And the strength of the tenants' position now is that they merely dispute the exclusive right of the landlord as a rent fixer. They say, and they say with truth, that if the landlord has his position they have theirs. Our Imperial Legislature, in its wisdom, seems to leave the matter to be fought out between the parties, and so the tenants say that they will stand upon their rights, that, in other words, they will not now give up at the landlord's bidding that which the law has fully recognized as being their own property. All this may represent a state of things not far removed from social disorganization. But it is a state of things the full responsibility of which must be thrown on those who are responsible for the rejection of the Land Purchase Bill of Mr. Gladstone, and of the Tenants' Relief Bill of Mr. Parnell.

Q. Then are you apprehensive that there will be much danger of outrages increasing if a policy of repression is adopted?

A. God forbid! But I do not like to enter into this question. As a Bishop I am responsible only for my own diocese. Thank God, we have here so far been very free from agrarian crime. I have remarked that in every address of welcome presented to me by the people of the rural districts of the diocese on the occasion of my first visiting them, crimes and outrages were sternly denounced. I have always taken advantage of the opportunity thus afforded me to speak out strongly on the subject. And I have remarked on every occasion with singular pleasure that, when speaking thus, addressing crowded gatherings of the people, no words that I spoke were more loudly or more cordially applauded than those in which I spoke in condemnation of crime and outrage.

The conversation thereupon became more general. His Grace expressed some confidence that the vexed question of Irish national education was in a fair way of being satisfactorily settled by the present Government; and when asked whether he did not think it time for Mr. Parnell to come to the front, replied that he had occasionally thought in the past that Mr. Parnell's course was mistaken, but on every such occasion subsequent and more complete information had convinced him that Mr. Parnell knew his own business best. Soon afterwards I took my leave, carrying with me one of the most important interviews which have been published in the English press since the interview which led to the despatch of General Gordon in his heroic attempt to rescue the beleaguered garrisons of the Soudan.

## C O N C L U S I O N .

THE conclusion of the whole matter is that Ireland does well to be discontented. All the "anarchy," and "organized embezzlement," and "swindling," which to excite Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury, would have been averted if Ireland had been allowed to adopt the necessary measures which her representatives demanded, and demanded in vain, from the Imperial Parliament. Once more, and that after the clearest warning and with the whole attention of the British

public concentrated on Irish affairs, the English majority at Westminster has repeated the mistake which, with no such warning, it committed when it rejected the recommendations of the Devon Commission, when it scoffed at the approach of the great famine, and when it threw out the Compensation for Disturbance Bill in 1880. There is a sickening monotony about the story of England's dealings with Ireland. The governing majority at Westminster is out of touch with the

majority of the Irish people. It is omnipotent, it is not omniscient. Blind it is and deaf; it cannot discern the signs of the times or discover that injustice must be prevented until after injustice has been done. The Irish are weary, and who can marvel? with perpetually addressing passionate entreaties for justice to the preoccupied, uninterested, and uninformed public of another land. They are never attended to until too late, and wrongs are not recognized until they are past remedy. Hence there rises once more from the distressful isle in our western seas a great and exceeding bitter cry of universal discontent. Discontent is a kind of dumb faith, almost the only faith of any real kind extant in Ireland at this moment. Discontent and despair are the two poles between which Ireland oscillates. And of the two discontent is infinitely more hopeful. Ireland is quieting down, is it? Becoming tranquil? God save Ireland then, for she would have given up even the effort to save herself. Nearly forty years ago Carlyle visited Ireland, and wrote of it on his return these words of truth and soberness:—

Ireland in the quiet chronic state is still more hideous than Ireland in the critical, even insurrectionary state. No, that is not peace; that of a governing class glittering in foreign capitals, or at home sitting idly in its drawing-rooms, in its hunting saddles, like a class quite unconcerned with governing, concerned only to get the rents and wages of governing, and the governable ungoverned millions sunk meanwhile in dark cabins, in ignorance, sloth, confusion, superstition, and putrid ignominy, dying the hunger-death, or what is worse, living the hunger-life in degradation below that of dogs. A human dog-kennel, five millions strong, is that a thing to be quiet over?

No, verily! and if the Irish were quiet they would never deserve to be free. They chafe in revolt under it, have long chafed; but have they enough resentment, other than that of mad despair, to learn the secret of getting rid of all that? It is an open secret, the secret whereby alone the English have done their best work in the world, have been able even to do the bad work that has been done in Ireland, the secret of Faith in God, which forbids us ever to despair of the future, and Faith in Man, which alone renders possible Union, Discipline, Obedience, the three steps which lead men to victory. Alas! I cannot say. Churches the Irish have enough, and priests; but of that faith in the Divine governance of the world which makes English and Scotchmen always confident that if they are but true to the right they must come off conquerors in the end there is not much in Ireland. "We have been disappointed so often," the Irish say, and it is true. Nor does it lie in our mouths to upbraid them. We have helped to blot out God from their universe, to teach them that injustice is stronger than justice, and that Wrong, when supported by soldiers and police, is stronger than Right. Thus it has come to pass that in Ireland faith in an invisible God, who doeth justly and judgeth the nations of

the earth, has largely given way, and in its stead there flourishes a kind of hideous inverted faith in the popular, palpable Devil—the Devil with two heads, Landlordism and English rule. And even now, when, in Carlyle's vivid phrase, "Our impious Irish Tower of Babel, built high for centuries now, against God's commandment, having at last, with fatal shudder through every stone of it, cracked from top to base; and bending now visibly to every eye, and hanging in momentary peril of tumbling wholly, and of carrying our own dwelling-place along with it"—even now they hardly venture to hope for ultimate success. "The unfailing energy of Good" is to them a phrase falsified by many a long series of iron facts. Generation after generation Ireland has reared the noblest of her sons for exile, for the dungeon and the gallows. The rewards of patriotism in Ireland have been the handcuffs and the grave. The finest flower of Irish manhood has been reared but to be crushed beneath the iron heel of English power. It is no marvel that Ireland, sick at heart, after her long vigil in the midnight gloom, is slow to believe that at last upon the horizon flames the bright promise of coming day.

Yet such indeed is the case, if Ireland has in her long and sore adversity learned the lesson which that period of probation was sent her to teach. The fatal vice that alone rendered it possible for us to torment her as she has been tormented for centuries was the absence of union among her people. And that absence of union had its root in lack of faith—lack of faith and confidence in each other. Distrust, suspicion, jealousy, these have delivered over the Irish as an anarchic race to be bound hand and foot by their English neighbours. Poland from the same lack became the prey of Russia, for Russians at least had faith in their Czars. We conquered Ireland because she was divided. We govern her still by permission of her factions. Home Rule has become possible because Irishmen are sufficiently united to return eighty-five Nationalists to Parliament. Home Rule will become inevitable if the union that first elected them can be maintained and strengthened. Ireland united means Ireland free.

Hence it is that the National League seems to me to be the sole hope of Ireland. Compared with the enormous services which it and the Land League before it rendered to the Irish people, the atrocities of the agrarian movement are but as dust in the balance. It has taught Irishmen to combine, it has taught them to trust their leaders and to rely upon themselves, and it has implanted a new hope in the Irish breast. We have suppressed it once, and it sprang up all the stronger for our action. If we suppress it again it will reappear in another shape. England has played the tempter's part in sowing dissension where she ought to have fostered union. It is an odious task, and one that I hope is now nearing its end. But the end will not be reached until the lesson of Union, of Discipline, and of Obedience has been thoroughly learned by the Irish people.

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